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By
JOHN NEVILLE FIGGIS, D.D., LITT.D.
OF THE COMMUNITY OF THE RESURRECTION
HONORARY FELLOW OF S. CATHARINE'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

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TO

CHRISTOPHER CHESHIRE

PREFATORY NOTE

THE course of sermons on Defects in English Religion was preached in August, 1916, at Grosvenor Chapel, Mayfair. It is reprinted by kind permission of the proprietors of the *Church Times*. The sermons on The Mysteries of Love were preached during Lent at Grosvenor Chapel and elsewhere, and are printed here for the first time. The sermon on The Office of the Priest is reprinted by kind permission of the Editor of the *English Church Review*. Unfortunately, the manuscript of the second sermon in the course on The Mysteries of Love was lost in the post. Its most important points will be found in my little tract on the Church. The paper on The Sword and the Cross appeared in the *Challenge* early in the war. It is reprinted by kind permission.

J. N. F.

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SOME DEFECTS IN ENGLISH RELIGION

I

Sentimentalism

"Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" S. Luke vi. 46.

WE hear much just now of the National Mission. Loud is the lament for the failure of the Church to convert the world. This failure is not surprising. Much of the outcry is needless. Liberty, full religious liberty, has only recently been achieved in practice. With the advent of liberty and the increase of education, conventional Christianity was bound to decay. Numbers in proportion make a worse show. So long as human sin exists, so long there will be many people who will not even try for the Christian ideal. Now that they are free, they say so. If we lose by this we also gain. Those who remain adherents of the Christian Church are

likely to be the more real. The Church has lost in extension, but it has gained in intensity. I do not believe that we shall ever convert the world, in the sense that we shall make all men conscious followers of Christ. I am not certain that we are ever meant to do so. Certainly we are meant to try. But Christians will always be the salt of the earth, not the whole.

What is alarming is not that the Church has failed to convert the world, but that she has failed to convert herself, or that her conversion is so very partial. That is serious. We Christian people, fully instructed Catholics as we boast, will be better employed in lamenting our own sins than in denouncing the grosser manifestations of the flesh and the devil. The tawdriness of a religion of material prosperity is obvious to us. We can take that for granted. Let us do our part in examining our own consciences and not those of other people.

Let us then try to consider on these Sunday mornings in August some defects of English religion. Those which are most prevalent it is best to consider. Commonly they can be found in most forms of English Christianity, although in very different degrees and proportions. I doubt whether any of them can be confined to any one party or body. We ourselves may be free from one or other. It is not likely that we

are wholly free from any of these. It is almost certain that we are not free from all.

I suppose that the first and most obvious characteristic of English Christianity which would strike a well-educated Japanese is its sentimentalism. This quality more than any other in Englishmen is what gains for them the accusation of being hyprocrites.

But we must define. Sentiment in religion is not sentimentalism. A religion which asserts above all things the friendship between God and man cannot condemn emotion. Real emotion, the passion for God and true religious rapture, the ecstatic sense of union or the passion for sacrifice : these are great things. There is more joy over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety-nine good people. Nothing is dearer to the heart of God than the tears of penitents or the selfless love of a S. Francis. But these things are not especially English characteristics. Only the other day a highly educated intellectual man was complaining to me about all this talk about repentance. What nonsense it was, he said, when things were getting better as a matter of course.

Sentimentalism means delighting in feeling for feeling's sake irrespective of its effect upon our life. It means also the use of language or gesture which implies deep feeling in order to

disguise our lack of it. I remember one clergyman who was unable to say even a vestry prayer without trying to get a break in his voice. We can see the contrast in literature. You have real pathos, not to be surpassed, in those four lines of Burns :

> Had we never loved sae blindly,
> Had we never loved sae kindly ;
> Never met or never parted,
> We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

You have the sentimentalist trying to manufacture the drawing-room rhetoric of sadness in Tom Moore, whose chief title to fame now is that he burnt the memoirs of Byron.

Now English religion suffers deeply from sentimentalism. It is not insincere. People make a great mistake when they say that English religion is insincere : at least it is not consciously insincere. In its deepest form the evil is to be traced to Luther. That great man went through a mighty experience, and when at last he emerged out of the tunnel his joy was great, and he called this the sense of being justified by faith. The result of that, as Father Kelly is always telling us, has been disastrous. It was thought necessary for every Christian to go through a similar process. Faith in faith was substituted for faith in God ; and as a matter of fact, if you read Luther's works you will see how very little really the personal

character of Jesus Christ was to Luther. It is a sort of *x*, his experience of faith which he desires to produce in everybody else.

Now in later ages this faith in faith has tended to become a faith in feeling. Nowadays many people loudly proclaim that religion is a thing of beautiful feelings and nothing else. These feelings are possible almost irrespective of any belief. Consequently all principle in religion is decried. Dogma is declared to be an outworn superstition. A dogma, you must remember, is simply a short statement of the meaning, the general gist, of religion.

So long as men can feel a certain sentimental interest in religion, that is enough. Everything else is secondary ; and thus we have undenominationalism. When erected as it is now into a fetish it comes to no more than this, just the vagueness of the religious temperament. There is indeed a nobler and an older undenominationalism. This concentrates on the great Evangelical and Catholic truths of the Incarnation and the Atonement. Believing them to be common to all Christians it would produce a union on those grounds, treating as unimportant, if not false, all doctrine about the Church or the Sacraments.

Now, as a matter of fact, these great fundamental truths are part of the Catholic faith not

yet submerged, and this pathetic hope is not undenominationalism proper. As that works itself out it is found to be incompatible with insistence upon these cardinal truths. Once accept the undenominational thesis, and you can give no adequate reason for insisting upon them. To do so is to be just as exclusive, as sectarian, it would be said, as the most hidebound Tractarian. I have seen it suggested that the undenominational difficulty in the schools could be solved by everybody's being supposed to teach these evangelical truths. But they would not be accepted. It would merely be setting up a new test that would not be acquiesced in.

You and I, however, are not undenominationalists. May we not, then, regard ourselves as free from this fault of sentimentalism? I do not know. Sentimentalism is independent of one's actual creed. Many people hold their catholicism or full church views, or whatever they call them, in an equally sentimental way. They preen themselves upon it, despising other Churchmen. Mr. Lacey, in that admirable book on *What is Catholicity*, has shown how mistaken is this view. A Christian as such, if he be a full Christian, is a Catholic. Catholicity is not something added on afterwards. The full baptized member of the Church is Catholic so far as he does not repudiate his heritage or fall into heresy. If

we believe that our Church is a branch of the Catholic Church then the Eucharist in the most extreme Low Church is the Catholic Eucharist. We have no right to confine the term Catholic to that part of it which does what we like. To do this is to make the same mistake as those other sentimentalists who confine the term Christian to those who have passed through a special form of spiritual thrill.

I do not mean that we are not to value and try to spread the Catholic faith in all its fullness with every accompaniment of outward splendour and everything that can suggest its history and romance in its ritual. Until we do this we shall not restore the sense of worship now so sadly lacking. Only we must beware of doing it in a narrow and unintelligent spirit ; to exhibit the spirit of the sacristy boy is not the way to convert the English people. Some people seem to treat their religion like a drawing-room pet ; it is merely their private individual taste. They prate of it just as a food crank chatters of the things he does not eat and you do. This narrowing pettiness, lowering the dignity of the most universal and grandest of all human things, the Catholic life, is rightly described in Mr. Osborne's new book on *Religion and the World Crisis*—a most admirable book on the whole aspect of historic religion in relation to the present moment.

One thing more, sentimentalism of both these types is at the root of the monstrous gulf between religion and the workaday world. Men are kept away from our churches not nearly so much by want of faith as by a feeling of their unreality. They do not seem to touch the life of an ordinary man. People say that this is especially true of the artisan classes. I think it is not very different with others: lawyers of good practice, doctors, business men, officers. The language seems to them unreal. A frequent attempt is made to raise ecstasies of feeling, and rightly or wrongly these seem to them hysteria. Of light on ordinary life, on the work they have to do and the means by which they are to do it, they find none, except in regard to morality in the narrower sense. So they just leave the Church on one side.

Years ago Mr. John Morley said to the clergy: "We shall not disprove you, we shall explain you." Nowadays he might say, "We do not think you are worth explaining; we shall ignore you." It is partly our fault, and the fault not only of the clergy but of all religious people. Religion is very beautiful, but we must not make of it an enchanted garden, something into which we retire, away from the sorrows and struggles of the commonplace individual. Christianity is the most democratic of all institutions not because

it gives any special view of politics, but because it includes the commonplace, the ordinary, the average, even the dull, and invests all with the splendour which love can give to any object.

We here probably lament the fancy religions just now so much in fashion. Quite right. But we must take care not to make our own religion an exotic. Nice talk about God, nice little books about religion, nice editions of the more alluring mystics: all these things are very well, but they seen little better to many than the picture of some hard employer who grinds the face of the poor, treats his workpeople badly in the factory, breaking all the Acts, and then once a week in a Sunday school teaches the children of these same people to sing "Safe in the arms of Jesus." There is just as much danger on the one side as on the other.

Religion is not an affair of nice feelings. Nor can we make interest in religion an excuse for neglecting our duties as citizens, that is as members of the fellowship of this people of England. The Christian religion is, above all things, an affair of great principles. Personal it must be in the extreme, for it consists of love, but love is not sentiment; it is union with the Will of God. Love to God and our neighbour sum up true religion; but it is love of a resolute, disciplined will, both corporate and individual.

I am afraid that some of us are so anxious to use our religion for ourselves that we often forget that corporate side. Even when we talk most of the corporate value of religion in Church life we do not see how far that carries us, and how much more it means than talking about the Church. It means that men's life is a fellowship, and that all things which interfere with that fellowship are of the devil.

S. John had religious emotion, the passion of religion at its very highest, more highly, perhaps, than any other writer in the New Testament; and we cannot go very far wrong, if we test all our sentiments, all our acts and emotions in regard to piety by the principles of S. John. He was no cold moralist, but a warm lover; yet he knew very well the danger of love's becoming merely a luxury.

"Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and every one that loveth is begotten of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath beheld God at any time. If we love one another, God abideth in us, and His love is perfected within us."

Let us pray that that perfection may be ours.

II

Legalism

"Woe unto you, ye lawyers!" S. Luke xi. 46.

LAST Sunday I spoke of the most glaring vice of English religion, Sentimentalism. To-day we will deal with its polar opposite, Legalism.

Our Lord taught us to see in God the wise Father: sentimentalism pictures Him as a grandmother. Legalism does the opposite. Its God is an irate governess. Sentimentalism lands us in the denial of all principle. Legalism reduces Eternal Love to a pettifogging attorney. Sentimentalism reduces the religious life to easy good nature. Legalism makes it a punishment drill. To the one worship is all emotion; to the other it is a piece of school repetition.

Yet in discussing sentimentalism we had to guard against the error of denying the due place of sentiment. So to-day we may deplore legalism but we must not abolish law. Society is an essential fact of human life, and therefore of

religion. In all society law is inherent. You must have general rules of action. No religion which is corporate can do without law. Anarchy may be the ideal of some; but only on a purely individualistic view of religion can anarchy be justified. In politics we have long ago given up this. It is more than absurd to preach sheer individualism in regard to religion. More and more is the social nature of religion seen to be its earliest and most salient characteristic. Still more is that true of our religion. Love to God and love to our neighbours are its governing maxims. These principles are essentially social.

Law, then, of some sort there must be in the Church. Otherwise it would not be a church, but a fortuitous concourse of pietistic atoms.

Legalism does not mean regard for law. Legalism means treating law as the aim and object of religion. It makes of rules the end not the means. Our Lord Jesus condemned it once for all when He said the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. Legalism will ever extend the system of rule; it will choke the spirit with technicalities. It has these two evils. First it introduces a mechanical hardness which goes entirely by rule and pays no regard to personal character or to circumstances; secondly, having put down rules, legalism produces the habit which is satisfied with a minimum. If the law be

complied with, that is all, and no Christian need look further.

The first of these errors was predominantly mediæval. The lawlessness of the Middle Ages was universal. In reaction against the facts of rebellion men loved a system of law theoretically perfect. Alike in spiritual and secular affairs they atoned for the raggedness of social practice by an elaborate and all-embracing theory. Some rules even were laid down in order that the Pope might make money by dispensing from them. The system known as the Corpus Juris Canonici had reference only to the Western Church, and we must never forget that the Western Church is not the whole. Its aim was to produce a system of scientific law comparable to the Corpus of Justinian. We have not yet escaped from the harm it did.

From the twelfth century onward the canonist conception of the Catholic religion dominated men's minds, and the study of it largely displaced theology.

To many people then, and since then, Christianity is above all things a system of rules. Legal notions of God, forensic ideas of the Atonement, ethics considered from a juristic standpoint, became prevalent. Against this arose the sentimentalist reaction. Now we see reaction against that reaction.

Too many now talk of the vast and magnificent grandeur of the Catholic life as if it were no more than a body of legal formulæ. They seem to think that its interpretation and propaganda require not the enthusiasm of the saint or the profundity of the thinker, but rather the blustering of an Old Bailey barrister or the subtlety of an appeal judge.

Too many, moreover, mean by regard for law not their willingness to obey law, but your duty to do what they tell you. They say : I tell you. This always comes from the legalist habit. It is, in common parlance, laying down the law. Our Lord saw it : Ye bind on men's shoulders burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves will not touch them with a finger.

Belief in authority, as I have said in this church before, is tested by our own readiness to bow before it, not by our love of bullying other people ; just as belief in freedom is shown by allowing personality to others, not by our own desire to do what we like.

The National Mission is to try to bring back men to the love of God, to proclaim His law as paramount. This is right. Too many have forgotten God and law. But there is no use in proclaiming merely legal grounds to people who do not yet even try to love God. Practices such as confession are sometimes recommended in a

legalist spirit. This only irritates people. Once let them realize something of the beauty of God, and they will see the need of penitence. Then they may easily be brought to seek it in the way which experience commends. But they will never do so if you merely tell them that they must.

Law, again, can do more than give a rough formula for ordinary cases. There must be difficult cases on the border-line. Hence arose casuistry, the science of dealing with cases on the edge. When it is difficult to know which class is right, casuistry is necessary. It becomes dangerous only if you try to make a general rule out of exceptional cases. Without it you get an unfair rigidity. Some defenders of tradition forget this. Love to God and our neighbour are the two eternal principles of God's law. All application of rules must be judged by them. You can have no system of law which has not a loophole for dispensations. This is known to the Romans, but it is not always realized among ourselves. Some people are all for applying the whole canonical system apart from those relaxations which alone rendered it tolerable in practice. The best practical rule is to lean to the lenient view when we are judging other people and to the severe one when we are planning for ourselves. But even that is only a rough

guide. A scrupulous person wants to be told the contrary.

One further effect of legalism is yet more evil. It lowers the standard. The contrary is the common opinion. It is thought that legalism is dangerous because its sets up an impossibly high standard and is unfair to the hard cases. That, as I have said, it sometimes is, but only incidentally.

The real evil in the long run is the reverse. If all acts are to be laid down by law you must take a low standard. That was the way in which in the Middle Ages the standard of one communion per annum become general. You may be anxious to keep up a high ideal, but if it is to be for everybody you cannot. Human nature is too strong for you; and, you must remember, law is always interpreted by custom. If you put your laws too high they will simply be ignored. You must legislate for the average, *l'homme moyen sensuel*. No harm is done if it is known to be a minimum, and if people are encouraged to go much beyond it. That is what is meant by counsels of perfection. If all England were to be converted to God to-night you could not impose by Church law a very high standard of daily or even weekly devotion. Is is impossible. You have got to legislate for the stableman.

Now, as I said, there is no harm in this if people know it is only a minimum and ask themselves how much more they can do. But where legalism is predominant, that is, where people think of religion entirely on legal lines, then such a low standard becomes universal. People often say that God is love and not mere law, and suppose that that means that the standard is easier. It is not: it is the reverse. Love exacts more, not less, than law. The more our love is real the more it will give. The enthusiasm of love is anxious to give, wants occasions of giving. Love is always exacting. For forlorn hopes you want volunteers. Your best friends take most out of you.

The more we realize that religion is love the less will anybody be satisfied with the legal minimum. For the same reason we ought to be ready to judge other people whose circumstances we do not know by that legal minimum.

It is legalism that protests against all high and heroic service such as special vocations. They are abnormal, peculiar, and won't fit into any pigeon-hole. This was at the bottom of Luther's and Melanchthon's hatred of the religious life, though they thought that they were anti-legalists.

Legalism, again, is opposed to new experiments. It would tie the Church down to the

methods of the day before yesterday. It is trying to do that at this moment. A legalist Church is a petrified Church, whatever the rock may be made of. Mr. Legality has ever been the bugbear of Protestants, yet they are often his victims. Legalism makes of religion a moral code, no more and no less. It takes from it its colour, its joy, its wonder, and its power to make people do the impossible. Is not the notion of religion that most Englishmen hold just this: the notion of a set of moral prohibitions, something unpleasant, like a signboard to keep you out of the shade of a wood on a hot day. That is what they think of it, when they dislike it. But if, in the common phrase, they hold with it, they look upon religion as a friendly policeman who keeps all vagrants and hawkers out of a respectable neighbourhood fit for nice people.

Now religion is the most wonderful, the most inexhaustible and varied, the most absorbingly strange of all human phenomena, even to look upon it from that standpoint alone, and it can never be reduced merely to a system of technical rule. As I say, it must have a law. That is inherent in religion, unless you are going to have it purely subjective, purely individualistic; and that would be false to human nature.

But we must not be tied down to law. Let us be careful not to judge others by a standard

which to them may be impossible. Let us be satisfied in the case of those whom we do not know with what is a bare legal minimum, but let us never sink to that legal minimum ourselves, or be content to teach it. And let us as far as possible avoid treating the experience of the Church, the lives of the saints, and the glory of the Sacraments in a narrow, lawyer-like way.

When our Lord said: Woe unto you, lawyers, He was not thinking of barristers in a secular court; He was thinking definitely of people who made of religion a law, and nothing else. We are all tempted to do that because it saves us trouble.

We are looking just now for the great wind of God's Holy Spirit to come breathing upon the dry bones of the Church; we must be prepared for it. Or else we shall make the same mistake as the Pharisees. They were expecting, they were awaiting, a great regeneration, but when the Messiah came they could not see Him, they could not believe Him. Why? Because He did not satisfy the canons and rules they had laid down as to what He must be like. So they brought Him to the Cross.

We pride ourselves every day that we are not like the Pharisees, and yet we are much tempted to their sins.

Let us pray God that while He may keep

within us a common-sense regard for the necessity of law and the spiritual self-denial involved in submission, He may also keep us from the terrible evil of reducing all the wonders of His redemptive power to a mere system of rule and prohibitions, laying stress rather on the negative, repressive side of religion, than on its positive, creative life.

III

Cowardice

"The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and what will ye do in the end thereof?" JER. v. 31.

COWARDICE is no vice of the Englishman: in the ordinary meaning we cannot ascribe it to the English Church nor to her ministers, nor to the members of any other religious body. Yet there is a cowardice specifically religious which may be shown by people otherwise full of courage. It is of that which I wish to speak.

First of all, we are afraid of our religion. No well-bred person likes to talk about it. "Don't talk about religion, it is not proper," it is said. Partly this a good trait. We don't want to wear our heart upon our sleeve. Certainly we do not want to emulate the gush of some convert to "new thought." No one understands the English who has no sympathy with the strange εἰρωνέια which takes the

pose of carelessness just when we are most deeply concerned.

Yet even allowing for that, I think we are afraid of our religion. We clergy, for instance ; we can talk about it in the pulpit, and lay bare our inmost soul. But most of us find it precious hard to do so anywhere else. I don't mean arguing about some controversial topic. People say that when we visit the poor we make a mistake if we speak only of general topics. They expect us to say something about God. We dare not ; and we think ourselves tactful. Years ago a priest said to me : What we call tact is nine times out of ten only cowardice. That is why we get conventional.

Afraid of direct speech and flame-bearing words we riot in abstractions or pompous periphrasis. It is hard to talk of Jesus or our Saviour. It is easier to wrap it up, and we end by wrapping up ourselves, so that the Church appears to many people at this moment to be swathed in the garments of a day gone by.

When we want to talk about penance we are afraid of the word. To speak about opening one's grief, or, the ministry of reconciliation, is nicer and more refined.

This National Mission, will it do any good ? It seems to be making some outsiders very angry. That is excellent so far. But the real test will

be the number of first confessions it brings about. Many motives keep people back from this. Cowardice is the most common, at least among such as are not ignorant about it.

German idealism, more especially Hegel, produced the effect on many of thinking that Christianity had its value, but that it was mainly secondary. True philosophy (that is, his own) was more ultimate. The Christian Creed was a crude and figurative expression of what there was absolute. Since that time many people have been ashamed of the more distinctively Christian doctrines even where they do not disbelieve them.

This began with regard to the Atonement; now it has attacked the Incarnation. It was said of the head of a college, not now living, that he shuddered if any preacher was so indelicate as to mention our Lord by name. Yet Christianity without its concreteness and colour is not Christianity. It may be a very good thing, but it is something else. Even more people shudder if you talk of the blood of Jesus or of His sacred heart.

Only a religion fixed on the Cross will be courageous. Christ on the Cross is its *differentia*, its meaning. Christianity is unique or it is not worth having. No good is done by trying to make it to be something else. It must be itself. It is not merely philosophy in a pictorial form,

a sort of Hegel for children, or even Bergson, to take a name more in fashion.

So with the supernatural. Victorian religion was afraid of it. Men found fault with the term. What was worse, they disliked the thing. They did not want to have to believe in a live God, and they do not now, many of them. The distinctly supernatural and other-worldly nature of Christianity was ignored. People thought of it, as I have said, as a form of idealism, or else they thought of it as philanthropy, social enthusiasm. Professor Santayana says somewhere that all modern religion is only social reform, whatever its nominal creed. That is not true. Yet in some places it is sufficiently nearly true to be disquieting.

Here lies the strength of Rome. Rome has never lowered the flag. She stands for the supernatural order. Against all the trend to pantheism and mere immanence she sets high the transcendence of God ; that is why she attracts. People who have religion know by instinct that it cannot survive if it be confined to this world. All efforts to defend Christianity by withdrawing to the second or purely naturalistic line of trenches will end in its annihilation.

The strange hesitancy of English religion, what Newman complained of when he talked about the safe man who was sailing between

the Scylla and Charybdis of "Aye" and "No," seems to make it doubtful how far any other body but the Roman will resist the tendency. I do not say it is doubtful, but some people feel it so, and they are tempted, therefore, to seek safety in Rome. They are wrong. That solution is one of cowardice too. Cowardly though it be to capitulate to the leaders of reduced Christianity, it is cowardly also to adopt the ostrich policy of pretending that modern inquiry has made no changes. That is not true, and we know that it is not true. Clear though we may be as to the imperishable creed of Christendom, we cannot wisely ignore the efforts of critics or students of comparative religion and history. We must face these things, take them into account. Two recent books, Mr. Will Spens' *Belief and Practice*, and Mr. Osborne's book, *Religion and the World Crisis*, attempt to do this on thoroughly Catholic lines. We have a grand faith just as we have a glorious country. We now know that we must fight if we are to keep either. But many people still hold up horror-stricken faces on hearing of an unbeliever. They are like an old-fashioned country squire at the thought of Radicals. How dare such people exist! I once asked an eminent dignitary what was the condition of a certain university in regard to the conflict between faith and unbelief.

He hummed and hawed and then replied, "I am afraid there is a certain amount of more or less aggressive agnosticism."

We must not retire into our fortress and look at one another and say that all is well, or that there are no real difficulties felt by men. We know very well that we feel them ourselves.

Still worse is that Olympian attitude about the ethical problem. How can people go about taking it for granted that whatever men may think about the creed they are all agreed about morals? Christian morals are attacked on all sides. When Tennyson's "Promise of May" was produced by Herman Vezin, Lord Queensberry made a scene at the Globe. He said it was monstrous to trace a connexion between unbelief and non-Christian morals; now, however, it is the proud boast of the unbelievers. You should read an article about Samuel Butler which appeared a week or two ago in the *New Statesman*. There the writer says plainly that the quarrel has shifted from one about dogma to one about sex questions.

This facing-both-ways of English religion is a weakness. But it has this defence. We are in an age of unsettlement, and things cannot be settled at once. The results of modern inquiry cannot really be sifted just at present; it will take long. But some things have changed.

No religious revival will restore the old view of the Bible or make people credit the literal accuracy of the early narratives or the Book of Jonah. All that has yet to be assimilated throughout the Church. Small wonder that some should throw overboard too much in the hope of saving the rest, or that others should retire into the ancient lines, refusing to consider any of the new knowledge.

Yet both these things are cowardly. They come from seeking sight instead of faith, and faith is the essential power in religion. We must live dangerously, Nietzsche said. That is the meaning of faith and the call of Christ; but nine people out of ten are trying for absolute sight. First they thought they had got sight by an irresistible, demonstrative proof of Christianity. Then they gave that up and thought they had at least got such proof of God. They gave that up, and thought that they could get not demonstrative proof but historical certainty, which should convince everybody, or ought to do. There many of them remain.

You cannot do without faith. You can establish no principles of any value in regard to anything, not even the presuppositions of natural science, without faith.

Still more disastrous has been our cowardice in regard to practical problems. Here is the

great spectacle of our individualist, capitalist world: Rockefeller at one end, slums at the other, and organized labour in between, and everything in a mess! Germany may be very bad, but she has no scandal like our slums. What is most deeply resented is not lack of money, but the denial of the rights of personality to the majority of those who really are the great industrial society. You will see this put well by Mr. Temple in his recent Paddock Lectures.

Now what have we done, we good Christian people of England, whether we are Anglican, Roman, or Nonconformist? Are we satisfied? Can anybody be satisfied who looks about him, in view of the appalling facts of child labour, prostitution, disease, avoidable accident, ruined lives, which are the basis of the fortunes of the rich and the comfort of us all? Here and there some one has raised a protest, only to be treated as a crank. I do not mean that we are to have a political or economic programme because we are Christians. I only say, Why, if we are going to make errors, should these errors always be errors on the side of the rich, so that people think of the Church as "the Conservative party at prayer"? If we must make mistakes, let us do so on the side of the disinherited. Yet most of us, even those who think of these things, hardly dare to lift up our voices. Why? We do not

want to lose support. Mr. Bernard Shaw has said that all religious organizations are sold to the rich. That may be unfair. Yet there is more grief in the circles of the Church over one rich man that departeth than over ninety and nine poor persons who never come near to be baptized.

True, we are not concerned with economic details. But we are with the Gospel of fellowship. No wonder they think us insincere. Here you are, they say, preaching that the Church is a society, that we are members one of another, that there is neither Jew nor Greek, but Christ is all and in all. Yet you lift no finger against the evils which make fellowship impossible; you are mainly concerned to denounce those who do lift their finger. "Dividends in danger" is the one cry that unites people.

People say they want the churches filled and all the workers there. They don't. "Why, he is filling the church with shop girls," said a woman to me once, in complaint of a certain clergyman. Our nicely sheltered congregations in the South of England would be shocked if the real artisan population came bursting in. They like a few, like the gardener's boy, but the miners, the mill-workers, and the foundry men! "Odi profanum vulgus et arceo," are pagan words, but they fit many Christian people.

For us there is no excuse. We call ourselves Catholics. Our faith is in a religion above all things corporate. We cannot stop. When you have adopted a principle you cannot make it stop where you like. It is all very well for people with a purely individualist outlook to take that line, but men have a right to ask that we who believe in fellowship should carry it out in other places than in regard to ecclesiastical politics. Yet even at this moment people are writing to the papers in frantic dread lest any taint of sympathy with labour should mar the futility of the National Mission.

I do not say that I have any programme. I only say that we ought to think about these things. People are thinking about them on all hands in quarters where it might not have been expected. Is this nation to be a more real fellowship after the war than it was before, or is it still to be divided by a great fissure?

After all, I take that merely as an instance of our religious cowardice. Christianity is the great adventure, the most risky and wonderful career, the strangest gamble ever known; and it rests upon faith, not upon sight. Yet the popular impression of the Church of England is that it is a comfortable body of comfortable people for ministering to one another the things that make life to them a little more agreeable.

All that comes largely from our cowardice and our unwillingness to think. The lines have fallen to us in pleasant places, and we have a goodly heritage. So we think we need not trouble, and that everything will come right as a matter of course. Now, at last, people have begun to see that they have gone all wrong. May God grant to all of us a brave heart and an enduring will that we may take the cross in earnest and not in sham.

IV

Complacency

"They have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people. . . saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace." JER. viii. 11.

THE Church of England at the close of the nineteenth century was the most respectable institution ever known in the annals of the human race. The scandals of the later Middle Ages were a thing of the past. The pluralism and laxity of the eighteenth century were mentioned only to be condemned, or, rather, were thought improper to mention. Unthinkable was that state of things when George III was forced to rebuke Archbishop Cornwallis for his immorality. Non-residence was forbidden and idleness reduced. The Evangelical and Tractarian movements and their successors had changed the face of things. In the towns activity and zeal were the rule rather than the exception. Where these were not, decorum was general. Learning was perhaps less widely diffused,

but it was considerable and in some cases eminent. Marvels of devotion had won men's respect in the slums.

How great the change had been we may see if we look into the Greville Memoirs or other books dealing with the time of King William IV. The cry for disendowment, at one time so loud, had become a whisper. This ought to be remembered by some persons who profit thereby. Owing to men like Father Lowder, Father Dolling, and Father Stanton, our liberals are able to occupy those cathedral dignities from whose serene composure they are able to level sneers at their benefactors. Corporate life had revived, Convocation after an interval of a century and a half had resumed its valuable labours, synods and diocesan conferences, Church congresses and ruridecanal chapters, guilds and societies uncounted testified to an awakened interest. Sisterhoods had sprung up in large numbers, and even the religious life for men had been revived. Foreign missions were never so flourishing, Church services were three times as many and ten times as variegated as of old. Preaching, if not so good from a literary standpoint, had many notable professors and some orators. Clubs and settlements, college missions, Church lads' brigades and girls' friendly societies gathered together the young for their good and occupied

the patronizing capacities of their elders. Visiting had been carried to a pitch undreamed of under the Georges. Parochial missions were hardly uncommon, even retreats were not rare. Good Churchmen could hold up their heads. Men like Dean Church, who at the close of his long life had witnessed much of this change, might well have supposed that so complete a revolution portended the conversion of the whole of England. So far as could be seen, Nonconformity, while still powerful, was not conquering new ground and barely holding its own.

All this was true, but it had its drawbacks. The Church of England has become more and more a society of respectable people. Its standards are those of good form, though it likes to dress its windows with the bones of martyrs. But as I said three weeks ago, the last thing you will say of it is that it is a society of penitent sinners. To the outsider it seems a body which has no place for sinners, real sinners. "Oh, that's for the quality," said a poor woman about the Holy Communion.

To give an instance, the one thing that no priest ought ever to be is to be shocked by anything he is told. Yet there are a large number of people who, though they may greatly need and even feel the need of coming to a priest to ask his help, would be afraid to do so, unless

they were very well informed about him, for fear that something they might say would shock the good man's sensibility. Another instance I may mention is that during the discussion of Prayer Book revision, in considering whether those extremely pertinent words at the beginning of the marriage service should be allowed to remain or should be removed, one archdeacon used words to this effect, "There is no doubt that our wives would think that such indelicate things should be left out."

English people have always leaned towards self-complacency. Macaulay pointed this out in his famous passage about the British people in one of its periodical fits of morality. Even now we find people thinking that it will mend the manners of the Germans to abuse them and to bring in fatuous verdicts against the Kaiser for murder. I think worse, not better, of the Germans than such people do. It is a pity to waste energies that might better be employed in destroying their power merely in saying that we are their moral superiors.

Let us consider some forms of complacency in the Church. First of all comes theological complacency. We are always thanking God that we are not as other men are: superstitious like the papists; emotional like those Methodists with their rather vulgar term "conver-

sion"; sceptical like the Unitarians. The typical English Churchman says: "I am no Pharisee. I do not fast once a week, nor should I dream of giving a tithe of my income. I object to all experiments in religion. They are un-English."

Some people talk about the English character as though it were the one thing in God's universe that needed no redemption. We might ask ourselves whether Rome with her hold on the supernatural and her welcome for the poor has nothing to teach us; whether we might not learn from the deep personal piety of Puritans; or even gather ideas from the Unitarians and their love of knowledge. We might do all this and yet not copy their faults.

Complacency in our own system of thought robs us of all aggressive power. Too often we seem to think that our own superiority is so clear that all who do not see it are fools or knaves and not worth troubling about. How different is the method of Jesus Christ: "Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in."

This complacency if unchecked will leave us high and dry with all the great currents of the world passing away from us. It kills enthusiasm, for if we are so secure, zeal seems a waste of time.

Worse than this is our moral complacency

which makes us content with the virtues we have and unconscious of any call to higher things. As Matthew Arnold said truly of the English middle classes " . . . they have great virtues of which they are fully conscious." " Where there is no vision the people perisheth."

Many people ask to-day what vision there is in the Church of England. This may be unfair, but I wish we would give heed to the question.

One super-eminent quality of English religion is its dislike of the heights and depths. It cannot understand either saints or sinners. I remember a country rector saying to me of a man, a Roman Catholic, " Oh, he has had an awful life." I said, " You mean he now and then gives way to drink; but has he not been converted? " " Oh, yes, but there are those outbreaks ": as though that were sufficient, and there was no more to be said about it. If S. Francis of Assisi were to appear to-day he would be locked up, and S. Mary Magdalene would be turned out of the Girls' Friendly Society.

The Church of England maintains with some success a high standard among those of her laity who really are adherents. Also she has shed a smaller proportion of the educated classes than has the Catholic Church in foreign lands. She has the greatest opportunity in the world, as Creighton saw. " The question of the future of

the world," he said, "is the question of the existence of Anglo-Saxon civilization upon a religious basis." That is clearer now than it was when he said it. We can bring forth out of our treasure things old and new. We can have the strength that comes from being rooted deep in the past, for we have surrendered no part of our Catholic heritage; and we can have all the power and wonder of the future, for we have no such upas tree as ultramontane autocracy. We are open to every fresh avenue of experience. But we cannot do this if we are the slaves of Philistine respectability. Yet that is what we stand for in the eyes of many, that is why large numbers of people like the Church of England.

It is all very well to have a hold on the bourgeoisie in the large French sense of that term; but those great classes who are not in any sense the bourgeoisie, what of them? How do we stand with them? We talked of one such class a week ago. Still worse is our record in regard to the intellectuals, artists, actors, painters, literary men or men of science. Most of them are repelled by us: and I do not mean merely anti-Christians. They think of us as tied to the apron strings of Mrs. Grundy. So we are. We present Christian love shorn of all the beauty of the Cross and the Manger, and we show forth the passion for God as the mincings of a smug gentility.

Is not that true to a large extent? And remember, we do not get over this by using phrases or saying that we are Catholics, and that we have the whole universal Church to draw upon. This church has the advantage of having been recently developed in that line, and so it has a feeling of freedom, but there are many churches which seem to have sunk down into a sort of religion which was described once as "auntism," a religion suited for people who gave up all hopes of matrimony in the 'seventies and 'eighties. You can find such churches, and you know it. So do not let us imagine we shall escape complacency merely by labelling ourselves. We can only escape it really by the Cross of Christ, as I said last week, something that is a sacrifice in earnest.

Social complacency is the worst of all qualities in our Church. A quarter of our ineffectiveness comes from this irritating vice among the clergy, and a full half from it in their wives. I do not believe we shall ever get out of it until the marriage of priests become the exception instead of the rule. That it is which has made the Church so much of an upper middle-class sect. If this is an exaggeration it is nearer the truth in certain parts of it than any other single statement. You can see this set forth in a little novel called *The Wonder Year*, by Miss Goldring.

The book has faults, but it shows you how this quality frets the mind of an educated writer descending into the country. And that is what people say about us. *The New Statesman* reviewed with praise Canon Scott Holland's *Bundle of Memories*. It called it "Anglican gusto," but it went on to say that such enthusiasm had no real place in the Church of England, and that what the Church of England really stood for was a certain stiff decorum, no more and no less.

Is that true? No, you say, it is not true. Perhaps not. Yet it is so nearly true as to be very plausible. It is your business and mine so to live that it shall cease to be even plausible.

I trust that I have not during this month seemed to you to be unduly pessimistic, for I do not believe in what is called the failure of the Church of England. I think there are wonderful hopes for the future. But I do not think we shall make use of our opportunities or fulfil our hopes if we merely sit comfortably as they used to do, thinking of our incomparable liturgy or something of that sort. Surely we have learned that you do not win the world without fighting, and we need to throw away from us all those swathing-bands and entanglements that hinder us. We know very well the truth of S. Paul's words in regard to the individual when he said,

"Let us lay aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us and run with patience the race that is set before us." But most people think that is true only in regard to their personal sins. That is not the case. We need it a great deal more in regard to the corporate sins and the kind of sins which we share very often while hardly knowing it.

Let us, then, examine ourselves and see whether there be no truth in these defects of which I have been speaking, and let us remember that we shall not get good, or do so much good, by denouncing them in other people as we shall by trying ourselves always and everywhere to avoid them. One communicant Churchman who manages by the grace of God to do this, whose Churchmanship is untainted by sentimentality and at the same time is free from the hard lovelessness of legalism, who is ever courageous, not merely in physical or moral matters but in regard to the great adventure of religion and the faith of the Cross; who is all these things without that worst form of pride which continually plumes itself on its difference from other people; I say one man or woman who is like that will do more good than a hundred books denouncing ill qualities in other people.

For remember that this can only be reached by the grace of God, and that the Church is a

strictly supernatural institution of which the meaning is our Lord Jesus Christ.

Hope for us is so great and so full and wonderful because we live by the power of an endless life; and Jesus Christ, we believe, will guide us to do His work, though it may not be to win earthly triumphs or the praise of men.

And will you pray that this National Mission may have in part that result, and that God will unite and bless the efforts of many to bring not only those without but those within to a true sense of sin and a knowledge of the forgiveness wrought by Jesus Christ?

V

Alive Unto God[1]

Rom. vi. 11.

THE words of to-day's Epistle show the psychological insight of S. Paul. The end of the Christian hope is to make us "alive unto God." That is our problem now, not whether people are to be religious, but whether they are to be "alive unto God."

Religion is now in fashion. Religious experience has become a recognized part of investigation. People don't mind discussing religious problems at the luncheon table.

They are proud of having a religion. (Not all are, but many.) The mystic has come into his own. The intimate self-communings of rare souls are now displayed, and read with eagerness. We might almost say that it was a new drawing-room game. Dainty editions of their work with nice ribbons come out. Books about mystics are even more in demand. In a great bookshop in New York I was told that there was a demand for serious books, and less novels were

[1] Preached at S. Mary's, Primrose Hill.

bought. Little books, sermons, bits of history, lives of saints, essays in religious philosophy, are read in thousands, provided they are none too weighty. All this had begun before the war. Since 1914 it has increased.

Here is a danger. People are rediscovering religion. They find the process exhilarating. Besides, nothing narrow nor dull interferes with their delight. They can have any religion they like. If they invent a new one, plenty of people will hail them prophet, or prophetess! A few years ago, if you wanted to be thought really superior, you had to be an unbeliever and let people know the wrench it involved. No such thing is needed now. It is more piquant to be a Christian of some new type, like Christian scientists, or better still to uphold one of those cults which still have the charm of Oriental mystery. Inside the Church parties are so strong that it is possible to make a hobby of your religious attachments. So people treat their religion like a pet, and grow enthusiastic over their special brand, just as a food crank does over the things he tells you not to eat.

All that I have been saying amounts to this. Our religion is man-centred. Subjective caprice rules almost every part of it. You and I share the great life of the grandest society in history. We look before and after. We are not tied down

to our own century or even to the Tractarian revival or the Caroline.

We can range at will among the centuries and make friends with the saints of many ages. We do not suffer from these eccentricities, for " do we not recognize Church authority ? " Well, we think we do. So did the Jews when they said they had Abraham to their father. We must remember that the Pharisees were the High Churchmen of their day. Yet they were the worst foes of the Spirit of God. It is possible to have all the right opinions and hold by Catholic order, to share in Catholic practice and prate of Catholic authority, and yet to do all this in a narrow, individualist way. In his work on Catholicity Mr. Lacey shows the difference between the true Catholic temper, and a mere adoption of certain Catholic shibboleths. Many so-called Catholics make of the grandest and most all-embracing union in the world a thing of their own private taste, a sort of property.

That is the danger, not that men should fail to recognize religion, but that they should treat it as a matter of taste, something that belongs to them ? Can you deny that that is what they do.

Religion, to be worth anything, must leave off being man-centred and become God-centred. The test of all this talk about revival lies there, not as some people think, whether or

not it ropes in larger numbers of those outside, but whether it makes "people alive unto God." Religion is not our creation, our invention. It is our response. "We love Him because He first loved us." There is the truly Christian notion of religion. All the trend of present-day movements is the other way. We think of religion as the crystallization of the ideal dreams of men, man at his highest. True, it is that. But it is that only because it is something very much more than that. It is man's recognition of the "splendour of God," his acceptance of the great act of Love on the Cross. Calvinism is dead. We smile at its crudities. We condemn as barbarous its notion of a God, creating countless souls only to give Himself the pleasure of damning them. Yet Calvinism had strength. Its strength lay in the truth it sets forth, not in the falsehoods with which a narrow logic encumbered those truths.

The strength of Calvinism was its terrific sense of God, the sense of election, not of choosing, but of being chosen; the sense of grace, power given from without, not evolved from within. These ideas were the strength of Calvinism, and these, if stated in due proportion, are the strength of Catholic doctrine. Baptism and the Holy Eucharist, and the whole cycle of sacramental principles, do but serve to emphasize it. They prevent us thinking that our membership in the Church is due to ourselves. They show us

that the grace which forgives and sustains is a gift, not a merit. "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit," saith the Lord of Hosts. All systems which minimize the sacraments ultimately make of religion a personal thing, a matter of feeling, the inner light, or else they explain it away into a rationalist utilitarian ethic. In one age you may have, as with the early Quakers, a vivid sense of God's call and personal revelation. By and bye this will vanish. Since no sacramental faith is there to insist on the element that comes from without, religion, even in the very act of repudiating mediators as getting between the soul and God, sets up the most dangerous of all mediators, namely the picture of ourselves. Religion to-day is greatly concerned with sublimating our own self-consciousness, and setting that up as an idol. Then it preens itself on its enlightenment as having no more use for these vulgar errors of Church and priests and sacraments, mere forms.

My friends, what we want is God; not this cult or that party, this experience or that movement, but God. Only as we get back to God and to the awe of God, only as we get away from self, and think about Him, are we likely to make real progress either as a nation or as individuals. Enter the rock, hide "thee the dust for fear of the Lord and the glory of His majesty." That is the

last thing most people want to do. That is why they care so little about worship. The notion of offering our best to God as a public society is not so much rejected as never entertained. To go to church is to get some private benefit. We judge the service by its capacity to express and heighten our feelings. Religion develops personality. But it develops it in the only proper way, the personality of each as members one of another, and of the whole family of God. The bane alike of preachers and people is the attempt to use religion to exploit personality as a private thing. Let us have done with egotistic particularism and fall on our knees before God.

"The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the Lord of Hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low: and upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lifted up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan, and upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up, and upon every high tower and upon every fenced wall, and upon all the ships of Tarshish and upon all pleasant pictures." Much that we have known since 1914 makes these words fresh to us. Let us see to it that we take them to heart.

VI

The Office of the Priest[1]

TO-DAY is for some men the most important in their life. On Trinity Sunday they are set apart for the office of priest in the Church of God. Many of us have memories of Trinity Sunday long ago: I was ordained priest twenty-one years back. Such memories must lead to a deep penitence. At this time there are fewer priests than usual. A dangerous shortage is imminent. For some time to come we are not likely to see anything like the average number. Even that was too few.

All the more reason is there that the laity should know what are the functions of those thus set apart. If there are to be fewer priests, it is doubly needful that they should no more be expected to fritter their energies by work that is not their own. I speak not of hobbies or recreation, but of adding to the burdens of a priestly life things that do not properly belong to it.

[1] Preached on Trinity Sunday, 1916, in Salisbury Cathedral.

Let us get clear what we want of priests ; then we shall not worry them by asking for something else. Mr. Clutton Brock has written one of the best books called forth by the war. It is entitled *The Ultimate Belief*. In that book he says that it is an inveterate vice of Englishmen to think of everything in terms of something else, i.e. to confuse activities that are in their nature distinct. This evil is rampant in regard to religion. Many people think that religion is equivalent to morals. They cannot see why such fuss is made about matters that have no direct and obvious bearing on morals ; for instance, the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity. It has a bearing, and a very important one : this was pointed out in an article in yesterday's *Times*. But it is not obvious at first sight. Religion involves morals, but it is in its essence something more wonderful. Others look upon religion as mere philosophy, a general view of the world. That it may involve ; but that is not what it is. Others again look upon religion as a mere social phenomenon, the expression of the herd-instinct. They think to explain it by knowledge of the tribal customs of Australasia. True, religion is a social fact involving an outward cult. That does not exhaust its meaning.

Religion is the organized response of man to God. The Christian religion is the collective re-

sponse of man to God, Who is in Christ reconciling the world to Himself. This you will find well brought out in Mr. Hardy's book on *The Religious Instinct.*

It is essentially social, a Church, the family of God. Men are not isolated units, but members one of another. Christ came to make a new race, a holy nation, a peculiar people. The Christian Church is the fulfilment of the hopes of Israel. The office of the Church is to be the bearer of redemptive life.

The priest is its representative. He is set apart to communicate that life to men. All that bears on that belongs to his office. All else is irrelevant. People are always demanding other things from the priest as priest. He must be manly, sociable, business-like, a scholar and a gentleman, a good speaker, an organizer, and so on. Some of these things he ought to be because he is a man. Others because he is a Christian. None of them attach to him precisely as a priest. A doctor is not the better for being unmanly, nor a lawyer for being unsociable. But we do not talk of these things as their peculiar *differentiæ*. We must take for granted that a priest has the qualities of a man, and also of a Christian man. A Christian ought to be a good son. Yet many good sons are not Christians. Manliness makes no one a Christian. Piety

makes no one a priest. To be a pious layman is as much a vocation as to be a priest. In some ways it needs a higher grace. The priest is the person appointed to represent God to the Church, and the Church to God. That representative function is his *differentia*. All his activities are to be directed to that end.

First, he represents God to man, i.e. he holds a supernatural office. To this end he needs leisure to pray. Sometimes folks grumble that the clergy waste time in prayer. Would to God they wasted more time that way ! If the National Mission does no more than increase the time spent in prayer by the clergy, it will do great good. To all men prayer is a necessity ; religion is no luxury. Prayer is the communion of the soul with God. To the priest it is doubly needful. Otherwise he will sink into routine. The evil of the Church is not idleness, even though some priests may be idle. Rather is it the doing of Church work in the spirit of mere business, something to be got through. The only way to avoid this is for the priest to be instant in prayer. If he does not, he will lose that touch of the supernatural without which he has no right to be a priest at all.

In the same way he must have time to study. The priest's work, outside a small class, has gone back in this respect. Largely this is the fault of the laity. Nobody knows, when a priest is at

home, whether he is at study or reading the *Harmsworth Magazine*. They do know if they see him running about all the morning, and sitting on committees all the evening.

So we have now priests who are proud to tell you they have no time to read. This is your fault. You like priests to be seen anywhere and everywhere. And then you criticize their sermons because they are not up-to-date. It is easier for a modern priest to run a tea-garden than read a book. If the priest is to represent the otherworldly interest, he will show it in his ways. He will not be the same as other folks. He ought to be manly. It is desirable that he should be cultivated; all to the good if he is socially agreeable. But that is not what he is for. Spiritual interests are his special function. On that ground, and on no other, are the clergy exempt from military service. People complain of the clerical manner. Partly they are right. At least, it is better than an unclerical manner. An unclerical priest is not the least like a layman. He is merely a priest who is ashamed of God. The best way to escape the clerical manner is for all parties to recognize the functions of the priest. The manner is the effort to secure that recognition by a conventional pose. When that recognition is given, priests are human enough, like Father Brown in Mr. Gilbert Chesterton's story.

The priest's function is, then, above all things otherworldly. Amid the din of earth he is to witness to the paramount value of heaven. If this be so, you will say, How can he help us? Aloof and apart he will have no entry into common life. He will have no interests that are not ecclesiastical. The only people he will have any use for will be Church workers and dilettante laymen who have *a penchant* for ritual or theology. That danger is real. Always there is a danger of the man being forgotten in the specialist. This can be seen not only among priests, but among doctors and lawyers and officers in his Majesty's forces. I do not think that it is worse in the clerical profession than in others.

When it happens, it does more harm. The priest must not neglect the second part of his office. He is ordained for men. He is to represent men to God. How can he do this if he does not know them? Far from being a glorified sacristy boy, the priest must be learned in the ways of men. He must be quick of sympathy. Unhampered by ordinary ties, he will move with freedom in all classes. Bishop Creighton used to say, "You can be on equality with all classes, because you belong to none. The moment you shut yourself in one class you are lost." Vivified by contact with life, his theology will not be a system learned and then repeated, but an ever-

growing apprehension of God's ways with men. Men expect that in bodily arts and the virtues that grow from them, the priest shall be a man, and know what men care for. It is no less needful in regard to the mind. So far from wishing the clergy to know less of what goes on in the world, I would that they knew more. Acquaintance with the dreams and ideals of men, good and bad, is a *sine qua non*. Just as he reads the newspaper, so ought the priest to read modern novels and go to the play. Recent changes in outlook were heralded in many ways before the war. The revival of poetry was symbolic. Some people would like a clergy ignorant of such things. Yet they are forward to blame for preaching a theology that is technical and a morality that seems unreal. A priest must study the temper of his own time and its natural language, without being the slave of its culture.

On both sides, you laymen need the same lesson. Priests are largely what you make them, if only because every priest is a layman for twenty-three years. Do not burden the priest with tasks that are not his. Do not injure your own souls by being merely passive, laying all on the clergy. There would be less numerous cases of break-down, and less futility in the work of the Church, if the laity did their own share, and expected the priest to do his. Now they expect

him to do theirs, and are careless about his proper function. Secondly, do not lay down a conventional standard of the books and plays a priest must not read, and all the while blame him for ignorance of real life. Above all things remember that the place of the priest is at the altar. There is realized his double office of representative, that of God to man and man to God. There he testifies to the supernatural gift of God's love to man and makes that gift operative. There also he brings before God, and in union with the One Sacrifice once offered, "the troubles of the people, the dangers of nations, the groans of captives, the tears of orphans, the needs of wanderers, the distresses of the weak, the despair of the sick, the infirmities of the aged, the sighs of youths, the temptations of virgins, and the laments of widows." That is the centre of the priest's work, as it is the centre of the Church's worship.

THE MYSTERIES OF LOVE

VII

Bethlehem : The Helplessness of Love

"In a manger." S. Luke ii. 7.

THE insight of the Catholic Church, in other words the collective insight of Christian men and women of many generations, treats the facts of our Lord's life as so many mysteries. This is true not only of the unusual events, but even of those incidents that seem ordinary. Masters of the spiritual life would have us use them as topics for meditation, trying in every way to realize and imagine their significance. They are right. Mysteries, indeed, are the common occurrences of man's life from the cradle to the grave. Each holds within it a revelation. Wonders in himself and in the world encounter the common man, as he goeth forth to his work and to his labour until the evening. Not love alone, but all life is sacramental ; it is a symbol of that greater than itself.

Beyond this, in a special sense it is true that the facts of our Lord's life are mysteries. They

are the revelation of perfect Love. Through the study of them we shall learn something of what it means. That study needs prayer and humility more than force of mind or learning. Not that these are to be despised. We need them. Yet they are not all, nor even the greater part. The intellectual method is external, analytic, rapid. The spiritual is brooding, gradual, reflective. By sympathy we practise, and then think, and then live as it were, the scenes we seek to realize, until we are one with them.

To this end the first need is that we should be simple. Jesus of Nazareth was simple. Some would make of this a reproach. Fancy, they say, making a God out of One Who spoke no word of art or science! He was not even imbued with the culture of His day, which was in some places considerable. How inferior in this regard He is to Cicero or Seneca or Plotinus, a little later, whom some just now seem to put in the place of Christ! Yet even this charge can be met. Jesus Christ is, even in the worldly sense, the most potent force the artistic interests of man have ever experienced. Certain notes of tenderness and sympathy are only present in works where the Spirit of Christ has been potent. Even Oscar Wilde hailed Him as the first romantic, because He bade men "consider the lilies."

In Lent we try to pray better, if we are not

among those dignified Church officials who employ pagan satirists to throw scorn on Christian prayer. So it shall be the mystery of the simple heart that we seek to penetrate. War has made many weary of all that is artificial. Even in religion the elaborateness of the highly civilized mind seems too self-conscious. We need the elemental, the heart of religion, not the clothes with which men drape it. That heart of religion is Jesus. Let us pray to Him, that He may give us light.

"In the manger." How familiar! From childhood we knew the scene. Very early nowadays can a boy or girl win delight from the dancing angels of Botticelli. Yet no pictures say all. What strange weakness is here! How utter the helplessness of the Love-child of a Universe! Yet the power therein concealed is terrific. Even from an outside standpoint that baby made more difference to human life than any other single event.

To many this helplessness is an obstacle. Some would like to believe, but they dare not. Can the Word of God have been uttered in this mean way? Shall we worship as Divine a Being Who at one stage of His earthly life was the picture of impotence; Who had to grow and to learn? The setting of God under the Eucharistic symbols offers far less difficulty. It is easier to conceive

the Divine as hidden under the material forms of bread and wine, than it is to believe Him present in a child's consciousness. Self-limitation is the last word of Omnipotence. Many of us still find it hard to credit.

This difficulty comes of our fondness for mechanical standards. If God be, as we claim that He is, Love, then His manifestation must always have as its condition that love which is His nature. For this end our Lord came. God's wisdom we learn in many ways ; so, too, His power. But Jesus of Nazareth speaks in the still small voice of His love. That is why we revere the Babe of Bethlehem.

He was bound to be helpless. Love cannot be love unless it gives up power. Even in creation this is so. Love sets itself limits. It is the essence of love to seek a response. That response must come from free spirits or it is no response. You cannot talk of the action of a machine, however delicate, as a loving response to love. If God be Love, He will create those free to love Him. If they are free to give, they must also be free to withhold love. When such withholding is done on a large scale, its evil fruit will be terrific. This we are seeing now.

People ask why God allows the war? Or how can He be either loving or powerful in face of what we see? Yet man having made the

use which he has of his freedom, the wonder is, not that God allows the war, but that He ever allows anything else. War does but give the opportunity to see the true meaning of passions which are disguised under the mask of civilization. Often the passion of greed and envy and pride is worse in peace, for it is less easily seen. What are we to think of the conditions of our industrial life, our slums and crowded cities, the withholding from many of all human personal interest in great concerns of which they are the making, cut-throat competition, fraudulent advertisements, company-promoting, that world of constant activities of which the representatives are Jay Gould at one end and a doss-house at the other? Are these things so beautiful that we are to give up belief in God, because for once He lets us see evil for what it is, gives us a straight course, and shows to men as in a mirror the inevitable ruin of a world which has turned its back on love? Some people talk as though the world had been a Garden of Eden until hell was let loose in this conflict. Believe me, it is far more probable that we are going through a salutary purgation, as Tennyson and Ruskin saw sixty years ago in the Crimean War. We have the record in "Maud," and in the last pages of vol. iii. of *Modern Painters*.

The difficulties which this war makes for faith

are due to two misconceptions. (1) The confusion of suffering with moral evil. This causes men to wonder how a God Who is Love can allow such horrors. Such horrors are, however, eminently congruous with the facts of human history. What annoys people is to find that modern enlightenment is no more proof against organized cruelty than was the Catholic Faith in the Middle Ages. Neither the facts of life as we have to live it, nor the philosophy of the Cross tends to any such view. They show that suffering is an element in all rich existences; that it is a condition in every kind of growth, bodily, intellectual, spiritual; that it is in the form of sacrifice a *sine qua non* for the full realization of love; and that it is often the sacrament of the highest graces. We must beware, indeed, of attributing to it any automatic or certain effect for good. All we can say is that it is often used to that end, and no advance of any kind is possible which does not presuppose suffering of some kind. This is well worked out in a little book, *Pain and Gladness*, by a sister in an English community; and also by Mr. T. J. Hardy in two articles recently published in the *Church Times*. (2) There is the notion that God, while making man free, ought to have also made him a slave; or at least, that He ought for ever to be interfering to hinder the consequences

of human selfishness. Why should God, if man be taught what it is to love, not allow him now and then to learn by experience what are the natural fruits of the opposite ?

Errors about God come from thinking of Him as other than He is. Calvin, for instance, argued thus from the abstract idea of God's omnipotence and ignored His love. He arrived logically at the notion of God's creating the vast majority of the human race simply for the pleasure of putting them to eternal torment. Other difficulties come from thinking of Him as mere wisdom, and arranging the world on a diagrammatic scheme. But if God be Love, He will want free spirits who can love Him. Being free, some will refuse. The world is no longer an absolute unit. We have, instead, the dear untidy universe we know, with its luxuriant wilderness of strange ways, and not the Dutch garden trimmed and clipped which some formalists would like to make it. If instead of a God Who is Love, you had an all-powerful motor at the back of beyond, then you might do without ill, but you would also do without good, for there would be no moral values ; you might do without warfare, but you could have no peace, for there could be no inner personal life. Every piece of the world would be up to sample, and the whole would be dead.

Further, not only was Jesus helpless in the manger, He was dependent. How are we to worship one like that? Because that is what He is like; and what Love is like. It is strange. Love has to show itself dependent, or it cannot be love. How often must a mother pretend she is dependent on a child's help, merely out of love and to awaken zeal! It is hard always to be helped. For this is a shock to pride. To give help is an act of grace. We are proud of it; our sense of power is enhanced. The crib and the manger gather round them all that feeling of possession in one who is weak, that pathos of the *petite*.

Jesus is ours not merely because He is Divine and our Saviour, but because we can see Him at one time being done for by others. Not too great to be helped is a title to fame; the mark of greatness as distinct from the merely grandiose which must always strut. Were our own Prince of Wales older, and therefore a general or field-marshal, do you think the soldiers would feel towards him quite as they do now? Jesus in the manger shows God's tenderness, and calls forth ours, as in that poem of Francis Thompson:

> Little Jesus, wast Thou shy
> Once and just as small as I?

Benevolence, the will to our amelioration,

might have been shown otherwise ; but the purely domestic note of Christianity belongs to this manger story. Some one said once to me, "Why didn't God become incarnate as ruler? That is the hardest job." Supposing He had, what then? All the world over the governing classes would find their account in Him. He would come in the class of Marcus Aurelius, or be read like the memoirs of Napoleon. Could He have been a comrade for the common man? Had He, again, come as a philosopher or an artist, He would have been captured by the *Intelligenzia* ; others would hardly be allowed even to admire Him. The Apostles failed to drive away the mothers and the children who sought Him ; but He Himself would have done so had He come in this way. Love must reveal itself in a life. Power or Wisdom can be expressed in single acts or sayings. Life to man is no life, unless it includes the weakness of childhood as well as the fixedness of maturer years.

Love, once more, is helpless because it is naked. We do not hear of Jesus as a property-owner. He was not of that class which secures special treatment on any public occasion. Love strips a man of his armour. It increases our sensibility and deprives us of our weapons of defence. That is why it is so easy to hurt any one who loves you. Scorn can be repaid in kind, and coldness

with contempt, where we ourselves do not love. But where we do, these things hurt. Jesus came in the way which left Him naked to the shafts of selfishness.

In all these respects Bethlehem bears its help to us. The impotence of Love therein presented, so far from being an argument against the revelation, is evidence of its reality. For ourselves let us learn this lesson. If we would follow in the ways of the Master, we too must be prepared for a like destiny. Often we shall be unable to use the power we possess. Often must we put ourselves in a position where we seem bereft of our natural resources. Often will it seem so easy to conquer, if we will only use the right means. Yet that means is the bowing down to Satan, which was to be the condition of our Lord's earthly dominion. God give to us a like power to resist!

VIII

Carmel : Love Contemplative

"When He had sent them away, He departed into a mountain to pray." S. Mark vi. 46.

LOVE is not merely active. It is also contemplative. It spends thought in realizing the Beloved ; delights in mutual presence. Otherwise, Love's action would spring from self Thus our Lord's activities were made possible by prayer. He found it needful to get away to be alone with His Father. Even He could not nourish His spiritual life as man without special times of quiet.

The dangers of the mystical experience, pursued for its own sake, are obvious. But we must not, because of its dangers, neglect its rare treasures. The best way to escape the pitfalls while racing for the prize is to fix our thoughts on the perfect example. Jesus was the perfect mystic. Evelyn Underhill, in *The Mystic Way*, has traced for us the life of Christ from this point of view. Some of the analogies between Jesus and mystics may

be overpressed. Some of them, such as that of the Calvary cry with the dark night of the soul, seem unmistakable.

Jesus, in His humanity, was one of God's Lovers. He knew that intimacy with God is deeper than words or any intellectual expression. All personal intimacies bear this quality. That which one can put into words is their least important part. Religion has been defined as "living from the deepest depths of being." More than others the mystic is conscious of this. All know that the mystic, like the poet, is removed from the common man only in degree. Every Christian with personal religion has some share in what is called the mystical experience, although in some it is slight and not always recognized. Let us try to see something of what this involves.

Love contemplative is occupied with God. The vision of God in some sort is its business. First of all comes the intellectual. That is in the outer court. But it must not be despised. Those of us who are not intellectualists are misunderstood. We do not desire to prevent the use of the intellect. We merely want to prevent its tyranny. We would not pander to stupidity or indolence, or intellectual cowardice. Intellect is needful to correct certain characteristic evils. Modern piety is too subjective. That we often

hear. Also it is too sentimental. We are for ever troubling ourselves about our own experience, our need of God, our plans for His service, our love of Him, our religion. These things are right in their place. But remember that religion is above all things a response.

God's Love to us, God's plans for us, God's hopes for the world, God's own experience to which all our piety is answer. It would be well, therefore, if we were to take trouble to think about God. It is curious how little we do this, we who believe in Him. The nature and attributes of God seems nowadays a dull topic. Theology in its true sense is out of fashion. In its place we have on the one hand the philosophy of religion, which is an analysis of human experience, and on the other, criticism or history. Could we follow Jesus on Mount Carmel, it would be better. We will not. We prefer to talk *about* mystics instead of treading the winepress alone. This is one danger of this so-called mystical trend. Many take pleasure as they toy in dainty editions with the austere wonder of S. John of the Cross. They keep with them the "*little book of the Love of God*," and hope thereby to reawaken faint echoes. Mysticism will do only harm, if it means a delicate interest in our own methods. But before anything mystical comes hard thinking. What does it

mean to say that we believe in God. The secret of all reality is Love. Is that true? It is terrific in its implications and its difficulty. Many of our difficulties come because people have not taken the trouble to see what this means. This is true even of some so-called theologians: a modern specialist in criticism on history may be lacking in knowledge of theology. Half the trouble about miracles is due to this. People do not believe in a live God, or at least they have never been at the pains to see what such a faith involves. Partly owing to the statement that God is *impassible*, people think of Him as a thing. We need a more dynamic notion of God. This is not a matter only for the learned. We all know what we mean by a person, however little we may be able to define personality. No single man or woman in the Church but could, if he would take a little trouble, arrive at a much clearer comprehension of the Christian religion. Let him ask himself, and spend time in thinking out, what it means to say that God is Love.

Thought, however, is only a means of arriving at conclusions about God. For intimacy we must enter into His life. That is why our Lord departed into the mountain to pray. That is what all of us need at this time. The interpenetration of spirits is the essence of friendship. "If a man love Me, he will keep My words; and

My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

First of all we need this in the shape of intercessions. Expensive dignitaries may deprecate too much prayer. Imagine our England suffering from a surfeit of prayer! Yet intercession is increasing, and will increase. Puritans sometimes attack Catholics as though they paid no regard to prayer. This is not fair. The error is due to the fact that set forms of prayer seem to some a bar to its reality. Also, they do not, cannot understand the meaning of the Mass to us, the supreme prayer-meeting. Catholics value the Mass for many reasons. One aspect of it is that it is the most potent form yet known in history of corporate prayer. We too may learn, are learning, from the other side. Extempore prayer will play more part in the religion of the future. Only let it be extempore. If it be a necessary part of the service, at some fixed point, as in the average Nonconformist service, then it tends to become rigid in its outlines. It has the principle of set prayers, and differs only in that the English is not so good. This dislike of intercession springs from the pride and self-sufficiency of individualist religion, which is the direct opposite of Christian feeling. The Catholic Church is a fellowship. What is the use of talking of the bond of Christian charity if we may not pray for those whom we

love? Moreover, this is so whether they are here or beyond the veil? Why, indeed, are we not to ask for the prayers of all others whose life is in God? Vain and stupid are the efforts to hinder this. They are as little like to succeed as the efforts of Canute's courtiers to stay the tide. Do not forget. In this and other things the tide is with us. True, petition and intercession are after all but the outside of prayer. That is what gives the leverage to those who attack them. Prayer is above all things communion with God; being in His society.

This getting alone with the Father was Jesus' aim in departing out into the mountain. This it is which frightens us. Most people are afraid to be alone with God. Yet religion is the development of a friendship, and that means delight in mutual society. Yet so afraid are we of this that even in church we like as much as possible to distract us. The Puritan ideal of naked worship had this end. It was designed to remove all adventitious attractions, and to bring man into God's immediate presence.

The method was a mistake; it ignored the sacramental principle, and sprang from a false notion of spirit as the negation of matter. But it did partly effect its object. These people, men like John Owen and many others, had a sense of the communion of the soul with Divine Majesty.

That sense is rare now. Nowadays when men shut out the outer world, they seem often only to exchange it for a yet greater chatter. Let us have our service of praise and music and incense and outward ceremonial. Also let us have times of quiet. Some of us "don't give God a chance," as a poor woman in my parish said. How can we expect to hear God's voice, if we never listen for it. People treat God as though you could ring up on the telephone and need not put your ear to the receiver. That is why people dislike meditation. They think they cannot picture things or work them out. The rules in the book are too elaborate. Other people's meditations, as published, seem unreal. They give it up. But meditation is the means of passing time in God's exclusive society. All these helps are suggestions. Use them by all means, if you will. But be not tied down to any. The hardest thing of all to stop is the machinery of our inner life. That silence in heaven of the Apocalypse is a symbol of what we need. But it is hard to attain. Real silence, silence of the mind no less than rest from action, silence of the heart no less than of the mind, and even silence of the spirit, this is hard. We make it hard. We don't want it. We are afraid. "Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips ; mine eyes have seen." That near-

ness of God it is which we at once see and fear.

Much is said now of a corporate silence, and a movement thereto. How much good this will do I know not. That implies organization and a good deal of talk. But I am persuaded that we need more and more of the reality of silence before God. The same need in the Middle Ages drove men by thousands into the cloisters. In the seventeenth century, it made that brilliant worldling the Abbé de Rancé into the founder of La Trappe. What is it going to do now? A good deal, I suspect. We need it more.

Louder daily grows the clamour of the world. This war is but one aspect of it. All our ears and eyes are now linked up by the telephone and the telegraph. How few are the quiet spaces, unless we make them, in our lives compared with a hundred years ago. Some now in the trenches may come home, asking for places of quiet. Even in England perhaps we shall see once more contemplative orders. We are sure to see an increase of the "religious life."

IX

Capernaum : Love Active

"He went about doing good." Acts x. 38.

JESUS lived a busy life. We are told that at one time He had no leisure so much as to eat; that at another crowds ran round the Lake of Gennesaret, so as to forestall the boat when He crossed to the other side; that the multitude thronged Him, and once in Capernaum they had taken the roof off so as to let down a paralysed man. Capernaum was His head-quarters. But He was always moving about. He had not where to lay His head.

So little place in the record has that anæmic lay figure of lily-white gentleness which some would paint as the portrait of Jesus of Nazareth. Not the least noteworthy fact about Him is the harmony and exquisite balance of His activities. Yet clearly this confession of crowded hours was vivid in the minds of the evangelists. Yet He never lost his calm. That serenity has

misled many; just as a quiet manner often disguises strength or even cruelty of will, so the gentleness of Jesus disguises from some the burning passion of love which consumed Him. Jesus never gets excited. There is no trace of flurry, no overlapping in His work. Yet every moment of the day was filled.

Still more ludicrous is the notion of Jesus as One Who could not face reality. His whole method is concrete. He shows no interest in abstraction. He is blamed for lack of theory. Those vivid images and illuminating metaphors, the parables so simple yet so profound, could have come only from One Who was alive to all that went on around Him. No recluse, no dream-haunted absentee from the highways of men, could have been so ready with plain tales, and metaphors, how perfect and unliterary, flashing like stars. The gospels are a model for style. They arrest the affectations of a sophisticated culture, delighting in echoes, unable to say a plain thing plainly. Had Jesus been a hermit or a student or a professional of any kind, there would be in them more of artifice, less of life.

Jesus' activity is indeed remarkable. Yet more so is the way in which He was active. Nothing of policy is here, nothing of programme. He was not an organizer. It is doubtful how

far it is correct to say that He founded the Church. By fulfilling the meaning of Judaism, He caused it to be founded, in so far, that is, as the Church was something new. The Call of Abraham is the real founding of the Church. Dr. Goudge has reminded us that we ARE the Jewish Church, and inherit the promises.[1] That must be so, if we are right in thinking Jesus the Messiah.

Our Lord did little else than found the Apostolic College, so far as institutions went. Doubts have been thrown on His institution of the sacraments, except indirectly. These doubts seem to me singularly lacking in historical insight. No one acquainted with other fields of historical inquiry would say that it is a likely interpretation of the Words of institution that our Lord had nothing to do with the origin of the Eucharist. Supposing it were so, it would make no difference to the theology or practical value, for the Catholic contention is that our Lord is continuous with the life of the Church. No one doubts that the Eucharist had developed very soon after Pentecost. What I want to emphasize here is the absence of grandiose programme. Jesus of Nazareth was, and the rest came out of it. That is all.

A story told of a famous Victorian school-

[1] Goudge, *The Mind of S. Paul.*

master is pertinent here. When a candidate for a new post, he was asked at the interview whether he did this or that, and taught the sixth, lectured on Divinity, and so forth. "No," was his reply to all his questioners. At last one governor flashed out, "Then perhaps, Mr. Blank, you would be good enough to tell us what you did do at Dunchester?" "I walked round," was the reply. They gave him the post.

Some such reply might have been made by our Lord to any hustling ecclesiastic. He went about. He walked up and down the hills of Galilee, He went from village to little town and across to the parts beyond Jordan. He healed one person here and a group of people there. One day He stopped and took luncheon with a publican. Another time He dined with a Pharisee. He stopped His mule to talk to a few children; on the Sabbath He would go into the synagogue for the usual service, and if asked would teach. All is easy, natural, free. He moved about diffusing a gracious presence. We cannot picture Him working to a scheduled time-table.

How different all this from the political Churchman or even from the laborious student or the professional philanthropist. How odd Jesus would look by the side of a per-

spiring ecclesiastic, never so happy as when addressing a diocesan board. How difficult he would be to classify for the organizing incumbent, who has all his work docketed on the card-catalogue system. One such man said once to me of a parish, that no useful work was done in it, because the curates did nothing but visit. Lately some one has been saying that visiting is an impertinence. That is not my experience as a parish priest. Personal work, it is said, we must set aside in favour of boards and committees. Doubtless personal work has its dangers. If it had not, it would not be much good. But at least it is the method of our Lord. The other is not. It has always been the method of those who in the common opinion have been most like our Lord, a S. Francis, a Fénelon, a Father Stanton. With the example of Jesus' ministry before him, it is little short of amazing that any Christian teacher should deprecate personal individual work, and cry up system.

So far from personal work being the defect of the Church of England, it is its absence which is the cause of most of our troubles now. So far as a large number of Churchpeople go, preaching is the main means of grace. Communion is rare, intercourse with the priest is slight. Sermons they do hear. Now sermons are a good thing. The Tractarian depreciation of preaching

has done harm. To brilliant preachers it is very good advice "not to think of themselves more highly than they ought to think." On the average man, however, this tendency is evil; for it makes him think he need take no trouble about his sermons. The low level of preaching about which so much is said is due partly to this. Preaching is sometimes the best means of bringing one man's vital experience into outward expression. Neither preaching nor book-writing is exactly individual work. People talk of the preaching of Jesus. But our Lord was not a preacher in the strict sense. He was the utterer of vivid images, and single phrases, like, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Crowds listened to His parables. But if you read the characteristic preachers of any age, you would find little to remind you of His method. Christian preaching was developed under the influence of the schools of rhetoric, so flourishing in the antique empire. S. Augustine was a professor of rhetoric before he became a Christian. Rhetoric is not always a bad thing. If you are to speak to people in masses it is well to know how to do it. But rhetoric, whether good or bad, has nothing to do with the sayings of Jesus.

Jesus of Nazareth was Love Active. He spoke just as He healed diseases, and taught deep

truths. He had none of the paraphernalia of the orator, any more than He had of the professional healer or the trained scholastic. His work was effective, because it was like play. All the finest things are like that. Drudgery and hardship come first; afterwards a fine spontaneity. It is obvious in what we call games. It is true of all the arts. I expect also that it is so with the higher forms of business and with the professional work of lawyers and doctors, of teachers, and even of the rare politicians who rise above vulgar aims. Work is at its best when (after long drudgery) methods have been assimilated, and our chief delight is the play of activities. That is why they say that in middle life a man's real play is his work.

Jesus was like that. But He was not obsessed by it. No task is so important that He cannot interrupt it for good reason. He went about doing good. We with our committees and our engagements and our strategics of evangelization are apt to have no time for mere kindness. We are too important. Sympathy is impossible to many a Christian owing to the zeal with which his time is mapped out. If we are selfish it is with a good conscience, *ad majorem dei gloriam*. That is a peculiar temptation of us clergy. But all good people are apt to copy the Levite who passed by on the other side. We

need to be loving God all the time, not to be so deeply absorbed in the means of serving Him that we forget the end.

This activity was essential if Jesus were to reveal love to men. We could not have the Incarnation without it. It is no Christian notion of God and His lovers, which sets them in a paradise apart, relieved from all obligations to society. That may be oriental pessimism or pagan stoicism. It is not Christianity, however much some Christians now and then give way to it. Yet it is a natural result of individualist religion. If religion be a matter only between the soul and God, then social activity will not be of its essence: it is merely something we choose to do.

We saw last week, on the topic of authority, that it all turns on the question whether membership in the Christian society is essential to the making of the Christian, or whether it be a convenient afterthought.

If the Church is integral to the Christian life, then active love, which is the expression of brotherhood, is essential. Yet how far we are, even devout Christians, from realizing this. People who kneel side by side at the altar would do anything rather than meet at the same table. Some congregations, even among those which preen themselves on their Churchmanship, are

far from the spirit of fellowship. Eclectic bodies of individuals drawn from everywhere, they have no natural cohesion, like a parish in the country. They do not feel themselves a community, except by the grace of God. Sometimes that seems absent.

On another side it is worse. How far can it be said that the Church promotes brotherhood between the classes in England? Do the wage-earners look upon us as the embodiment of fellowship or love? If they do not, why not? Do Churchpeople behave as such? What is their attitude in any labour crisis? Is it one of sympathetic understanding? Does their prejudice lie on the side of the poor or the rich: and the latter, remember, means the comfortable classes, not merely the folks with large incomes? What is their cry, dividends or the lives of the people which make dividends possible? In the troubles last year in Wales, how many of those who denounced the men took any pains to learn the facts? How many of them knew either that the owners were making huge war profits, or that the men were demanding only what had been conceded by mine-owners elsewhere? The poor are not always right. I think they were wrong then, since the war was a fact. But why should Churchmen be ostentatious of sympathy with the top-dog, and so timid of

giving unwise help to the poor? It is wrong to help the poor unwisely, but it is more wrong to pander to the self-complacency of the rich.

These problems, you say, are hard; I don't know what to think. They are. I am not saying that any solution is obligatory. What I am saying is that we as Christians ought to be worried about social justice more than unbelievers are. Not about comfort. There a materialist may well be more zealous than we need be. Yet it is not lack of comfort, it is a sense of economic injustice which is the rankling sore in our existing social system.

Above all this Jesus' life rebukes the selfish religionist. Men may be in earnest, yet all the while their religion is a personal luxury, a matter of taste. Modern transport facilities make this easier. In large towns every one can select the church he likes. The moment he is annoyed he can leave it without disloyalty. Eclecticism is rampant. Churches cater for this or that taste, music or preaching or ritual or what not. Even the Catholic movement suffers from this spirit, although it is its polar opposite. The spirit of the conventicle is not a matter of doctrine. It consists in making religion an affair of a coterie. Yet zeal is a good thing, and where this is absent a man cannot be bound to attend the church he most dislikes. How, then, are we to distinguish

between zeal for Christ and His Church and mere excitement about a hobby of our own? The best criterion is that of the text, Active Love If you go about doing good, your Church is to you something more than a luxury. Our Lord's active love affected His work in yet another way. His teaching is not abstract. It never reeks of a class-room. There is nothing stuffy or second-hand about it, nothing learnt by heart. It is universal, human. Much is made just now of the atmosphere of the Jewish world of that day, and on those points such knowledge may help us to understand Him. But it is curious how this provincial among provincials has struck the most universal note in all history. People say that our Lord does not discuss ideas; certainly He does not lay down a system like Plato. Yet the work of genius is always the work of intuition: even in science this is true, as witness the case of Newton or Darwin. The systematizer who works out its implication comes later. Our Lord did not talk technical terms, but whole philosophies, like that of S. Thomas Aquinas,[1] are based upon Him. It is because He is the Truth, not because He spake the truth, that our Lord was a stimulus to the human mind. That Life which is the Light of

[1] This is not to deny the debt of S. Thomas to Aristotle.

men has flamed out into wonderful beauty in every kind of art. The charge against Jesus that He was not a specialist is true in the sense of fact. The implied condemnation, that because He was not an academic theologian He had nothing to teach, is ludicrous, especially to those who have acquaintance with academic theologians.

Let us pray God, that we may learn from the life at Capernaum; that our piety be never selfish, but that active love may show itself in our lives and make men take note "that we have been with Jesus."

X

Tabor: Love Transfigured

"He was transfigured before them." S. MARK ix. 2.

TRANSFIGURATION is an element in the life of Love. It was fitting that our Lord should be transfigured before His chosen intimates. The Transfiguration might well have a greater place than it has in the round of the Church's year. How rarely, too, does one find a Church with this dedication: though there is one dear to many in New York. Touching beyond words is this mystery. Its teaching for the Christian is yet more penetrating. As a modern critic says, the account in S. Mark bears the stamp of authentic experience. It comes after the great confession of S. Peter, who saw in the poor man of Nazareth the Messiah long expected. It revealed to the wondering companions something of what that more than earthly charm in their Master did in reality imply. Since then, the whole of human life has been transfigured.

Love transfigures its object. It reveals its inner meaning. To the Apostles was manifested

our Lord's true being. I suppose that even His enemies would not have done what they did had they known this. Not love it is but hatred that blinds most. Men say that love idealizes, that it paints an untrue picture, that it deludes the imagination. But as a fact it does this less than unbalanced hatred. Even dislike of a person sets one's judgment strangely wrong. Likes and dislikes have much to do with our estimate of the artistic or literary work of persons of the second rank. Love often reveals the inner powers of a person, unsuspected before.

The Transfiguration of our Lord showed Him in converse with departed spirits. It removed any Sadducean misgivings about the other world that may have lingered in the minds of the Apostles. Probably it had another effect. It damped their political ardour. "They spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." When this topic of the rejection came on, we know how hard of hearing the disciples were, how bitterly S. Peter resented the insult to his Master. In after-thought the dazzling vision must have been to the three far from exhilarating. Passing strange it would seem to them that the heavenly visitants had nothing better to do than discuss "the decease which He should shortly accomplish in Jerusalem."

That warning to the Apostles is needed;

needed more than ever. The Cross itself has been transfigured. Most of us think of it as a symbol of our religion. Few of us realize how right Mr. Shaw was in his facts when he derided Christianity as Crosstianity. The Cross has become a decoration, an ornament, something to hang on your watch-chain—but something to die on? Never. "Be that far from thee." Its criminal and contemptible associations have been blotted out by the blood of Jesus. We forget what it means not merely of pain but of disgrace and scorn. We resent these things when they come to us.

This and every age has to learn afresh the lesson. Jesus may be accepted as a teacher and even as a prophet by many who repudiate His divine claims. Yet more. Some will follow Him as Lord, honouring the Incarnation, and all the while find the Atonement a difficulty. "To the Jews a stumbling-block, to the Greeks foolishness." This was a defect of the last century, confined to no one party. Bishop Westcott made everything of the Logos doctrine. He was fundamentally Alexandrine, assimilative in his method. His *Epistle to the Hebrews* lays more stress in the life than the death of Christ, to say the least. Many followed this line. Crudities of expression and an undue emphasis on the Evangelical side led to a reaction which

went too far. Now, however, the era which culminated in Moberley's book on the Atonement is at an end. Westcott and Moberly and McLeod Campbell and others will continue to make their contribution to religious thought. Some of their work is permanent. We need the other side no less. A stronger and more vital hold on the Cross will be the note of all effective religion in the age now beginning. His death marks not the close of a series but the meaning and purpose of His life on earth. Bishop Rhinelander will be found of much help in this direction. In his Paddock Lectures on the *Faith of the Cross* he writes as follows :

" It is the Cross that really makes the difference. It is the Cross which is the crux. It is the Death of the Cross which quite literally creates what we call Christianity. All our thought and study, if it is to be really Christian, and really occupied with Christian history, that is, with the documents and sources, must converge upon the death of Christ as the spokes of a wheel converge upon the hub, which holds them all together just as the whole experience of any Christian, of the wisest saint no less than of the last converted sinner, comes through and in the broken Body and the shed Blood. The Cross illumines, warms and vivifies the entire realm of Christendom just as the sun, once

risen, lights and heats and quickens the whole earth."

We owe a debt also to writers like Canon Simpson and Dr. Forsyth, and to the brief but learned monograph of Mr. Mozley, an honoured name in English theology. It is to be hoped that his balanced judgments will carry far. The " cruciality of the Cross " is an ugly phrase, but it sets forth a truth.

Love transfigured on Mount Tabor occupies itself with thoughts of the supreme sacrifice. The transfiguring of all human life by love has its lesson for those who hold strongly to the Atonement, who are not afraid of such phrases as " imputed righteousness." Some of those who value most an objective Atonement have made this error. So well are they satisfied with the one " Sacrifice once offered " by the Redeemer that they deem superfluous all sacrifice of their own. The costly gift of Redemption is theirs, and they settle down comfortably to enjoy it. Catholics are sometimes blamed because it is said they substitute the Cross as an example, cross-bearing for the Cross as an achievement, God's gift in Christ. If they do this they are wrong. Are not some of those who blame them also wrong ? Do not they often tend to rest in the Cross as an achievement and to ignore it as an example.

Religion is no anodyne. It does not take away all suffering from the world. What it does is to make it worth while.

Love does not remove pain. It transfigures it. Any mother's love shows this. How much of suffering both in body and mind must every mother go through. All is made worth while by love. We know this by the opposite. Instances too common there are of selfish women refusing the privilege of child-bearing because of the sacrifices it entails.

This is true no less in regard to minor interests. Not one of us but will face drudgery and hardship for something we care about, even though in any other cause we might cry out against it. The idlest schoolboy will take pains over some private hobby, stamp or butterfly collecting. This transfiguration of suffering by love is the meaning of the Cross of Christ. Nothing inhuman or perverse, as some charge, is taught under this name. It is the voluptuary who is inhuman. Nations have perished for no other cause but this. They have all become hedonists. Then when the crisis comes they have not the nerve left to make the needful sacrifice. *This is what the Germans thought had happened to the English.* Families and business firms and prosperous towns have gone to ruin through the same cause. Do not let us ever be deluded

by the loud clamour of our adversaries into treating Christian ethics as against nature. Because Christianity is superhuman it is not therefore inhuman. As I have said before, the Cross philosophy "dying to life" is the postulate of education, the hope of art, the condition of success in business, the inspiration of the soldier and the lover, no less than it is the laurel of the martyr and the glory of the saint. S. Paul expressed a part of his own experience when he used those words "as dying, and behold we live; as having nothing and yet possessing all things." Some now fighting in the trenches will tell you that it is true. An officer (before the war in good professional practice) with artistic tastes wrote to me that he did not know what was going to happen, that privately he was, he supposed, ruined, but he had never been so happy. Only such people have the sense of freedom. These things will always take place. The sacrifice of mothers, of lovers, of patriots, will be found in all systems. The point is what gives them their true ground. Christianity is the true humanizer, for it gives to the pieties of human life their meaning and their end. This is shown by contraries. Already those who have no faith are openly repudiating humanity as an ideal. Facts are disproving the notion that human life will be cared for in proportion as we reject supernatural

sanctions. Vicarious sacrifice is a universal law of life. Its supreme expression is the Cross of Christ, which shows it as an element in the life of God. The other side, "dying to live," is not a perverse asceticism, but the condition of progress for spiritual beings who grow: the necessary means of overcoming the gulf between what we are and what we want to be.

The Cross is a paradox, I grant, the supreme paradox. But it is that kind of paradox which expresses the mystery of life. Otherwise it would never be worth while to take trouble for anything. This may be a help to us all: God's grace is given not to take away the Cross, but to help us to bear harder ones. Nor must we expect ever to be rid of the Cross. Always we are hoping to have done with it. This and that difficulty will be overcome. We ourselves shall be better trained. All will be easy. Ah! it is not so. When we find this out we think that we are cheated, and God is hard. He is. That is the condition on which we serve Him. To quote Bishop Rhinelander once more:

"The Cross is, first of all, the climax of His own personal and perfect obedience and holiness. The Cross is, secondly, the Divine sacrifice of love which works the miracle of our redemption and relief. The Cross, because it is these two, is something even greater still; it is the principle

of Christian fellowship, the way in which man comes into and lives in union with his God. No one follows Christ the Crucified without a cross of his own upon his shoulders. No one can plead the merits of Christ's sacrifice for his own sin, unless he by Christ's grace is himself being sacrificed by sin."

Did you read those words of Mr. Locker-Lampson, that brilliant young M.P. who has gone with our air squadron to Russia. "He asked others to join them and said: 'I promise you not rewards or decorations or money. I promise you difficulties, dangers, and perhaps death.'" Jesus Christ is like that. He does not insult us by promising only ease. To each of His servants He says the same thing: "In the world ye shall have tribulation." "If a man will not take up his cross and deny himself, he cannot be My disciple."

Only remember two things. The Cross is not hardest in its most obvious form. It is easier to be heroic in face of pain than in face of scorn. Martyrdom of some sort we think we can face. It is the icy contempt, the refusal to inquire, to know, and so forth that is harder.

Secondly, the Cross to many, especially now, is best found in the ordinary vicissitudes of life. Anxiety, bereavement, peril for those you love, perhaps their lifelong suffering, that you all are

facing. You face it whether you have any religion or none. But, if you unite it with the Passion of Jesus, it may become to you His Cross. The hardest thing of all is to accept in the spirit of Jesus those kinds of trouble which come to us in the course of life, and in no way distinguish us. Our pride in all the other cases sometimes turns the Cross into a source of distinction. But we cannot do this in matters that are common to all men. All we can do is to offer it in silence. Let us pray, that He may give us grace to do this.

XI

Jerusalem: Love Acclaimed

"Hosanna to the Son of David." S. Matt. xxi. 9.

IT was a poor little pageant. A rabble of peasants from a province of a province, a few of the humbler class in its insignificant capital, a place that was to Rome what Hyderabad is to London; the central figure a wandering preacher seated on a donkey; boys and girls shouting, that is all. That is the triumphal beginning of a universal empire. What was there here to excite anger or even interest? Sights more moving might be seen hourly in the metropolis. Ephesus and Alexandria, Antioch and far Massilia, "crowded with culture," would smile less at the scene, which was common, than at the anger which it aroused in the rulers of the Jews.

Yet these Galileans were right. He Whom they hailed was King, is King. Disloyal and weak His subjects may be, yet even to this day He reigns. Even His foes admit that He is a King of Hearts. Of all His rivals none has yet

come near Him. In the worldly sense that is true. The acclaiming of Jesus expressed a fact. So far it was no more than acclamation. Calvary is the real beginning of the reign. This unstudied recognition of the King of Gentleness changed the face of human life.

Clearly, His "kingdom is not of this world." It never has been. Faith has ever been its foundation, faith and a willing loyalty. Errors are made by those who try to model the Kingdom on an earthly state. That is the error of the mediæval Church, an error still made by some. The Puritans made a like error. These things do not affect the fact that the imperial crown of Jesus Christ is unlike any earthly diadem. Its jewels are thorns.

Kingship commonly implies a coercive power over human acts enforced by the sword. But the highest royalty is theirs who win the free allegiance of men to new ideals. Jesus changed the things that men admire.

First of all, He is, as the acclamation expressed, the Messiah. Through Jesus Christ the Hebrew mind came to rule the world. Ideas, characteristically Hebrew, of righteousness, of the holiness of God, of sin, and redemption, became predominant. I do not say that no such ideas, especially that of salvation, are not to be found elsewhere. But in their totality they are Hebrew.

Modern civilization is far from perfect. Men are for ever sinking back into the beast, as the Wittenberg story proves. For all that, this civilization had as its foundation the Hebrew doctrine of fellowship, of love to our neighbour, even though some may forget that this love is rooted in the Love of God. True, the Jewish governing caste rejected Jesus of Nazareth. By that rejection, and by the death which followed it, they gave to the root ideas of Hebrew religion a universal power. That it would never have had, had they maintained their narrow notions of political sovereignty. True, therefore, it is to say that Jesus re-established the throne of David. He turned a tribal chieftaincy into the lordship of the world. He did more. He changed the ideals of men. The royalty of Jesus Christ is the royalty of One Who sets forth a new way of life. He made people want different things. He made them admire different kinds of people from what they did before. Much that He said is not clear. A thousand years hence men will laugh at us for not understanding Him better. Still, we know this much. Jesus Christ set a new value on certain types of character. As against the old pagan ideal of force, He set the new ideal of gentleness. He made men see that strength is not greatest when it explodes, but when it is controlled and refined by love. Against

the old ideal of pride He set the new ideal of humility. What a change that was. Even now we hardly realize how much it meant, nor do those who think it a change for the worse. How Aristotle would have scoffed at the fruits of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, long-suffering (save the mark !), meekness, gentleness. Why, they are merely emotional sentiment, or they are contemptible, the notes of the slave, not the great-souled man.

"We live by admiration, hope, and love." What men do depends in the long run on what they admire. I do not mean that they live up to their ideals. No one does that. The higher the ideal the wider is the gap between our acts and our aims. That is why there seems so much more unity about a man with low aims than another with high ones. Yet in the long run human action is conformed to what men admire. That is the way things tend. No one can help trying to be like those whom he admires. That is where Jesus was so wonderful. He got men to admire Him, and so insensibly to begin to copy Him. The worst Christian who loves does that, does it more than he knows, more than we can see.

Owing to Jesus, everybody to-day thinks differently, judges differently, values things and people by different standards from what he

would do otherwise. This is true even of those who reject His Lordship.

Lordship is His claim. It is a Lordship of Love. But it is a mastery, no mere title. It means a willing acceptance of Jesus as King. We speak of Him as our Lord, Master, King. How much do these terms mean in our lives? Let us be enthusiastic for the Church and the corporate expression of religion. After what I said in the second address, you will not think that I undervalue that. Only let us not forget the meaning of the Church. If we do, we lay ourselves open to the attack that we put the Church in the place of Christ. The Church is the expression in human society of the Spirit of Jesus. Membership in the Church means personal loyalty to Him. To that text we must ever bring ourselves back. It helps us to judge our acts and our policy. Had this reflection been more common, some of the worst errors in history would have been escaped.

Loyalty to Jesus, that is the essence of Christianity. In thinking of others, we must always bear this in mind. Let us never regard, or behave as though we regarded, as outside the Christian circle those who are living by that loyalty, even though they may come short in our judgment of the manifold riches of His gifts to the Church. Some unity there

must be, however hidden, that binds together all for whom Jesus is Lord, and that though their formal creeds are not the same, and their external societies mutually exclusive. Unity comes of unity of will. All who call Jesus Lord must mean something which separates them from those who do not.

This is not the point on which I would dwell to-day. It is this rather. Is your personal relation to Jesus a reality to you? You call Him Lord? Is that to you more than a cant phrase? "Why call ye Me Lord and do not the things which I say?" Many signs came from Jesus that He knew there would be many camp-followers in His army. Do you really try to do what He wants because He wants it? Has His friendship any hold on you, to keep you from what gives Him pain? "How can you ask me?" is the reply. "Those parts of the liturgy, of the Bible, that most appeal to me are those which have to do with this. All my favourite hymns express this. 'Jesus, the very thought of Thee,' 'How sweet the name of Jesus sounds,' 'Oh! my Saviour lifted!' and so forth." Precisely. Yet nothing is more deceptive. The two pitfalls into which the religious man may fall are (*a*) legalism, (*b*) sentimentalism. I know not which is the worse. It is not enough to feel love for Jesus Christ. We are to be His servants. It

is a long way from sentimental affection to that word of S. Paul, "I am crucified with Christ."

You know how a certain kind of child behaves. To its mother or father, as to some older friend, it is full of affection. If very young, it hangs round your neck. If a little older, it is brimful of welcome when it meets you; it takes the most obvious and flattering delight in your society. It is rich in endearing expressions, inconsolable when you leave. But it never *does* anything to please you. It never gives up a whim. It pouts at rebuke. It tries to get its own way by threatening to withhold that winning look if you refuse it. If of later growth, the boy or girl asks advice; but only to have his own sentiments confirmed. If it does not, it makes no trouble about letting you know you really are rather stupid. For its own comfort, or merely out of want of consideration, it will put you to needless trouble. Yet it would be scandalized if you said it was selfish or vain, or that its affection was a form of self-indulgence. Such beautiful feelings it has, they must never be hurt by the truth. If you seek to let in light, it frankly tells you that you are a little crude and cannot understand so delicate a mind.

Is not this the way in which many of us treat our Lord? We fix our own standards, or to be

more correct, we adopt the standards of the world, about spending money, pleasures, getting on, amusements, and so forth. Our Lord's will plays no part in this. Still more is this the case for many when they plan for their children their education, their future, though they are shocked if they go off the lines. All of us want our own way. Some good folks demand in addition that our Lord, like an indulgent friend, shall tell us that it is also His.

What we need is not sentimental affection, however sincere. The sincerity of the people I think of is appalling. Not insincerity, but a lack of sense of humour is the matter. What we want is the consecrating of our will to His. That is a hard thing. It means a long discipline; all that I said last week about the Cross. We need not be surprised if we have it not all at once. We ought to be surprised if we find ourselves making no effort to attain it.

The opposite error marks our penitence. There we become legalists. We are sorry for our sins. Of course we are. They annoy us. They humiliate us. Sometimes they almost compel us to doubt our own professions. We confess them. So far so good. But do we think of them as anything more than breaches of a code? Here it would be well if we had a little more of that personal feeling. We need to think of sin as

grieving the Sacred Heart. "Crucifying the Son of God afresh"; what a terrible phrase! How terrible, that it means so little to most of us!

When I think of my own failures, they weigh me down. Sometimes I am deeply depressed. Then I begin to wonder whether this is because I fail where I would like to succeed; or really because I have done harm to Jesus? What is the use of staking your all on a cause if you are over and over again to sleep at your post? These things are pertinent just now. This National Mission, of which we hear so much, is to bring the nation to a sense of sin. The way to do this is not to go about bewailing the wickedness of irreligious people. Rather let us meditate on the shallowness of our own penitence. Good folks when anything of this sort comes think it is meant for any but themselves; they are to be distributing agents, like helpers at a school treat. We shall get no way if we think only about the unconverted. It is ourselves who want to be changed. Let us use this season to deepen our sense of sin, as meaning treachery to a friend. Then and then only shall we be fit to help others.

XII

Love Triumphant

"Christ, Who is our Life." Col. iii. 4.

THE triumph of Love is the triumph of life. No more foolish notion has ever occurred even to a clever man than the notion that a religion of love is a religion of death. Death in the sense of decay is the polar opposite of Love. Death in the sense of sacrifice, suffering, even physical death, may have much to do with the Love. These things are the price which Love must pay in order to realize itself.

Love is the most triumphant, absorbing and overflowing fount of action. It gives stimulus to mind and body. By its nature it is creative; it is opposed to all that is morbid and decadent. It is the most positive force in the world. For it is life concentrated at its highest expression.

True, Love involves self-denial. It is essentially giving, out-going from self. Yet, that self-denial is only a case of *reculer pour mieux sauter*. It is a *dying in order to live*. Whoso will lose

his life for My sake shall save it. Not Christ it is, but Oriental pessimism, which teaches men to lose their lives, so as to annihilate the evil of personal existence. Our Lord says the contrary. We cannot possess even ourselves, so long as there is any outer boon, physical health, wealth or life, which we will not risk, rather than lose such possession. "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Love always individualizes the lover. A man devoted to the mistress of his dreams may deem the world well lost for her smile. In so doing he is not less, but more a person, than he was before. So with a motherhood or friendship. Individuality grows with every act of self-sacrifice. Look at S. Paul. Was ever a more dominating personality? Yet he could say, "I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live. Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Love's final conquest is the Resurrection of our Lord. One of the Apostles puts it with profound insight. He was loosed from the pains of death, *because it was not possible he should be holden thereby*. Jesus of Nazareth was a being of such rare quality, that Death could not do with Him what it did with every one else. People who find it hard to believe the Resurrection forget this. All through the life of Jesus on earth this fact is evident, unless you are prepared to jettison the

Gospel narrative. His being, His "make," not merely spiritual but physical, was finer, rarer, and more mysterious than that of other men. So it was doubtless with our Lady. One difficulty about the Birth story is due to people thinking she was just an average, respectable woman. Mary was of a nature highly uncommon. She was "highly favoured." That was possible to her, which would not have been possible to her sisters.

Long since men have known that our Lord's spiritual nature was unique. Only by a false abstraction do we fail to see that His bodily organization was also unique. We have standardized mankind. Evidence is forthcoming that in the strange borderland between the physical and the psychical the human race is subject to even wider differences than those hitherto known. Even as it is we know the vast difference between the intellect of a Hottentot and that of an ordinary member of the higher races. Yet it is not of differences of intellect that I am thinking. Rather, it is the whole personality. Our Lord was Incarnate Love. That is admitted by some among His enemies; men who think the worse of Him on that ground. If Love be the Eternal reality, the stuff of which all things are made, and other powers be but the vehicle of Love, then we can see how in regard

to this final and most difficult barrier of all, Love was able by its perfection to surmount what in other cases is insurmountable. I do not say that we can see how this was done. The Resurrection would no more be a miracle, were we able to analyse it, as we analyse ordinary phenomena. Even in them, however, it must be remembered that in regard to the simplest operation of nature, such as the effects of light, modern science does not explain. It only describes the how of phenomena, and the claim to explain has been given up. The peculiar difference between blue and green to our consciousness is in no way explained by saying that one represents more vibrations than the other. This merely states the fact in different terms. The psychical facts of "blueness" and "greenness" remain what they were. Still less can we expect any explanation of the Resurrection, at least in detail. What we can rest in is the fact. A detailed account, like that of Latham's *Risen Master*, makes us realize it better, and strengthens the impression of the evidence. It does not explain the fact.

The Resurrection surprised the disciples. It surprises us still. That is strong evidence of its truth. This shows how false is the view that the story was created by faith. Faith to that degree was precisely what the disciples had not

got. Slowly and with reluctance did they come to own that Love had achieved its triumph. Worn and dispirited, they had witnessed the failure of their hopes as they stood round the Cross. All that was left was to inter with reverence the body. Then came the flash of revelation dazzling them. "The narratives are not easy to harmonize." They are not. A great lawyer said to me only the other day, that is no difficulty. No one acquainted with evidence and the discrepancies in quite ordinary narratives could regard that as a ground for disbelief. Only on the long-discarded theory of literal inspiration are these discrepancies a difficulty. That theory still lives to do harm both to orthodox and infidel. In one point all the narratives do agree. None of the disciples, not even our Lord's mother, expected the Resurrection. Only after the event did they see the drift of much that He had said on this topic. The change of mind wrought by this event in the disciples is admirably brought out in Mr. Neville Talbot's book on *The Mind of the Disciples.*

Some men admit a spiritual resurrection but deny the bodily. This tampers with the best attested part of the narrative, the story of the Empty Tomb. Or else they admit the story, but seek other means of explaining it, as that the Jews had stolen the body.[1] The Christian

[1] Cf. Le Roy, *Dogme et Critique.*

institution of Sunday replacing the Jewish Sabbath is one of the strongest evidences for the Rising on the Third Day, and is opposed to the notion of merely spiritual appearances. Besides, to separate in this way between soul and body is to indulge in that false abstraction which treats the spiritual as something entirely apart from the physical, and by implication banishes God from the world. As a fact we know neither body nor spirit apart from the other. Westcott defines body as " the expression of the life in terms of the environment ! " If our Lord be alive still, as distinct, we may be assured that His life clothes itself in appropriate form. That form is in the semblance of triumphant Love. Such triumph could come only through pain and death. Without such assurance there is no hope for faith in the only God that is worth having. Jesus Christ torpedoed all other notions of God. We cannot worship a power which is not in the highest sense good, i.e., does not will the good of the world. But for the Resurrection the tragedy of the Passion would be an irrefragable argument for pessimism. For it would show us Love conquered by selfishness, and nothing to repair the disaster. Easter reminds us that it is not so. " Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord."

XIII

The Sword and the Cross

READING a daily paper, I found one article in which was expressed a hope that when we obtain victory we should refrain from thanking God for it. It is hard to conceive a view more calculated to do disservice to the cause of religion. Either we believe that our quarrel is just, or we do not. If we do not we have no right to go to war. (Only on German principles is war admitted on any ground except that of the assertion of rights.) If we do think we are right we not only may but ought to pray for victory ; and, if it comes, to sing *Te Deum Laudamus.* Victory may be withheld like any other temporal blessing ; and we can pray for it only with the reserve of " Thy Will be done." But unless we can pray to God for success, we have no right to be in this conflict. To suggest the contrary is to cast a slur upon the functions of our soldiers and all those brave Belgians. Personally, I believe that at this moment no man is more truly working for the cause of God in the world than the

soldier in the trenches ; and I would I were serving Him half as well. This war is a conflict between all the forces that make for liberty (i.e., the spiritual being of man) for justice (i.e., the value of every man) as against the forces of tyranny, and the superman, which would enslave the world for a conquering race, the " splendid blonde beast " of Nietzsche.

Before we come to that, let us clear away some of the fog that obscures clear thinking on the relation between Christianity and war. For it is obscured. Much sentiment is now prevailing to the effect that all war as such is wrong. This is not Christianity, it is nothing but Tolstoyism. Tolstoyism with its over-emphasis on mere passivity has led by reaction to Nietzschean ethics, with their apotheosis of savagery. Yet many people seem to take it for granted (1) that war is the worst of human evils ; (2) that all war is wrong, and that no Christian approves any given war except through hypocrisy. I do not believe either of these propositions, and I will say why.

The first of these, the notion that war is the supreme evil, rests on a view of the world which is ultimately materialism. Suffering and death are the worst of calamities only on a voluptuary theory of the universe. The vogue of Christian Science is another instance of a tendency now

widespread. If this life be all, doubtless the achievement of ends at the cost of death is more than foolish in the individual, and barely defensible in the State. War, doubtless, causes more obvious and acute physical pain than any other social institution. If, therefore, we are to avoid pain either for ourselves or others, and to avoid it at all costs, no nation would be justified in making war, unless by so doing it made it less probable for a long future. Such a doctrine is assumed too readily to be Christian. So far from being Christian, it is the very opposite of the religion of the Cross, which bids us save our life by losing it. It is also opposed to the doctrine of courage in its most ordinary and human tense; and this doctrine is after all only Christianity in embryo. The Cross of Christ explains and develops the presuppositions of all normal life in regard to the meaning of courage, the value of sacrifice, and the elemental value of pain both in moral education and in positive gladness.[1]

But it is said, while it is right for us to face pain ourselves we have no right to kill people; and to justify war is, therefore, un-Christian. I fail to see the argument. If it were valid, it leads us straight to anarchism, as it did lead Tolstoy. War does on a large scale, and as between groups,

[1] Cf. a little book *Pain and Gladness*, by a Sister in an English Community.

what every organized political society does on a smaller scale, and as between individuals. If we are wrong to make war, an individual is wrong who goes to law. For the sanction of all law is the force of the community, which will, if necessary, execute the wrongdoer. Further, it seems to be supposed, that while it is Christian to endure pain, it is un-Christian to inflict it. This rests on the same error. Since we know that pain has been often good for ourselves, we cannot altogether wish it lacking to any over whom we have the charge. Discipline and group-cohesion is ultimately impossible without it. Those who deny its legitimacy would be logically driven to an absolute individualism, destructive alike of civilization and of religion.

The fact that war directly causes death, and other forms of discipline are primarily concerned with restraint or minor forms of suffering, has nothing to do with the matter. Death is the ultimate meaning of all employment of force ; nor would it even in warfare be usual, if it were possible to reach the desired end any other way. That is the reason why (except by the Germans) the lives of non-combatants are to be preserved.

This brings me to the second point, the notion that all war is wrong. That notion rests on the presupposition best expressed by the great Quaker orator, " Force is no remedy." The

ground is different from that discussed above, and in some respects inconsistent with it. The former rests on materialistic arguments; this, on the contrary, is a perverted spiritualism. So far as I can understand it the claim that force is no remedy involves the notion that, since realities are spiritual, all attempts at achieving ends by material means are doomed to failure. This argument, then, rests on the idea of the godlessness of all the world of Nature; ultimately it is Manichean, seeking spirituality purely in abstraction, logically destructive of the Incarnation and the Resurrection of the Body. The reverse of this is the truth that the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; it is expressed most fully in the Sacramental idea, and is denied implicitly by those who would substitute the immortality of the soul for the resurrection of the body.[1] Force in a State is never mere force; it always implies a state of mind. The idea which nerves the German army is spiritual, though it is pernicious; it is the world-hegemony of the German race. The force of any army is ultimately moral; it depends on a unity of wills. Even in private no man can raise his arm to strike another without exercising moral no less than physical energy. The notion that force

[1] Cf. on this point Westcott, *The Gospel of the Resurrection*, closing pages.

can be treated as a substance separate from all spiritual realities is not tenable. Such force is not encountered in human affairs. The State wields a force made up of the union of living wills.

The question, then, of whether or no force is a remedy resolves itself into the question of whether the coercion of men by their fellows is ever either justifiable or effective. If force may not be used in warfare we have no right to use it in civil matters, or even in education. What is really involved in this is the problem whether human life is essentially social or not. If it be, then the claim to exercise force (that is, for the spirit of the group to make itself effective as against recalcitrant individuals) is a just claim. This will be conceded within a State by most of those who would condemn war. But it cannot be conceded for internal affairs (i.e., against individuals) and at the same time denied in external affairs (i.e., against other groups). War is the means, and the only means, whereby the spirit of the national group can make itself effective against the spirit of some other group, which denies it clear rights or interferes with its liberty. What possible means was there for the Belgians to assert the reality of their own national group, save by resisting the Germans? Where would be the freedom and justice on which Englishmen most pride themselves; where would

be even our right to condemn war if we were not living in a sheltered arbour defended from international brigands by the sacrifices of past ages? War is the policeman which secures the safety of our homes; and every Englishman, when he sleeps and eats, owes as much to the soldiers and sailors (and indeed a great deal more) as he does to the courts of law and the civil administrators. This war, more than any we have had, will show men the true foundations of security; and the pacifist is like to learn that even the possibility of his vapourings needs an army and a fleet to maintain it. We cannot do without force in life. The purpose of Christianity is to consecrate force and use it rightly, not to do the impossible and leave the world to anarchy.

There is a final argument raised against the lawfulness of war. This is derived from the Sermon on the Mount. It is difficult to understand how the organized defence of rights by a nation (which is analogous to litigation by an individual) should be considered wrong merely because our Lord condemned the returning a blow in anger. It is easier, indeed, to defend war for a just cause than much litigation, for the latter is so purely personal. We have another fact to consider. National intercourse has not reached the same height as individual intercourse.

Since, however, international right may be violated (as in the case of Belgium), and since we have not a universal Empire, war is the only possible means of vindicating justice; and the fear of war is still one important means for restraining wrong-doing. This is only wrong if the two principles we dismissed are valid. Moreover, our Lord in regard to divorce taught the principle of institutional development. Divorce, He said, is wrong, but it may have been needful once. Moses gave it you "for the hardness of your hearts." So far as non-Christians and the secular State are concerned this condition still continues and divorce is a recognized legal method. Is it not the same with war? Unless we are disciples of Nietzsche, we do not believe warfare to be an ideal condition; but the world has not reached the state in which war as an *ultima ratio* is to be left out of the question. Besides, the modern State as such is not Christian, but composed of all, irrespective of religious belief. War is thus given us for the "hardness of our hearts"; and until sin be done away alike for the group and the individual, it may be a useful purgative and object-lesson of what is the true inwardness of the passions of greed and envy.

XIV

Problems of Prayer

"Ask, and it shall be given you." St. Matt. vii. 7.

THIS evening I want to answer one or two difficulties in regard to prayer; for it has been felt by many people as presenting great problems. The first, and, as I believe, most important problem about prayer is: What does it effect? Some people are for saying that the only effect of prayer is on our minds; it composes and calms the mind; it unites us with the will of God; it teaches us resignation to all that is; but it in no way alters the course of events. That, however, I think to be wholly wrong.

People ask: How can prayer change the will of God? They say that it is blasphemous to suppose that our prayers can have any result beyond ourselves, because God's will is unchangeable, that we ought not even to wish to change it.

Now, God's will (willing the good of His creatures and of the world) is constant, it does not change; but the conditions under which that

good can be brought about are affected by human action of all kinds.

If man is free, then the good of all mankind can never be completely fulfilled until man's freedom is always and invariably exercised aright ; that is, so long as sin remains, God's will, which is the perfect good of His creatures, cannot be fulfilled.

So it is with prayer. It may be that God intends and desires for us certain goods, but that He will not give us them unless we are willing to ask for them. God in that way acts precisely like a wise human parent. You may have many boons, gifts, pleasures that you are willing and, indeed, desirous to give to your children, but you will teach them that they are not to have them unless they ask properly.

Our prayers are just that "saying please," without which the will of God for our betterment can never come to fruition. So, then, let us get rid of the notion that our prayer effects nothing, that its results are only subjective, that it does not cause things to happen which without our prayer would not happen, things other than changes in our mind, for no one doubts that prayer affects the mind of the person that prays.

Once we realize that prayer, that asking, is the condition without which God will not in many cases give, the condition, the *sine qua non*, of the

fulfilment of His will for our good, then all the objections arising from the immutability of God fall to the ground. We must remember that God's immutability, like His omnipotence, must always be explained by His love. People have got a very wrong idea of His immutability often, which makes them think of God as not love. But love is the most inexhaustible, various, and changeful spirit that there is. God's love never changes, but it expresses itself in various ways; and so His love for us would not be love if there were not matters about which our desiring to ask Him were not the condition of that love's fulfilment.

Having got so far, and swept away that difficulty, we must consider the next. Our Lord says: "Ask, and it shall be given you." "Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

Now here, especially in face of the war, many difficulties are felt. We know, as a matter of fact, that in the literal sense such desires as we have for the safety of all our friends could not be fulfilled. We know that if everybody in this country were to pray hard that his own friends might be preserved, it could not be fulfilled literally in all cases. I do not say but that there may be, and very often is, some special answer to the depth of prayer of some person. But at any rate

we know that with war going on, unless the war is to stop, there must be some people (and we know how vast the numbers are in this case) there must be some people who are killed and wounded and taken captive.

Also, we know that two sides cannot win the war. We may pray quite sincerely, and we ought to pray (it is nonsense to say we ought not) for victory. And our enemies, also, or some of them, may do the same. But both sides cannot win. Nor can we say that victory is necessarily the reward of justice, because a nation may be in the right in some particular quarrel, and yet through its own sloth or selfishness in the past be unable to make its just cause prevail. Besides, sometimes a cause which is just may be oppressed by the will of God for the benefit of the world. We know very well that the Church has gained and not lost by the death of the martyrs. And it is so in the affairs of nations. We cannot judge the right by the event, and say that the cause which is victorious is the just one. At the same time, no nation is victorious in war without some good quality.

How, then, are we to pray? Are we, as some people say, to leave off praying for any earthly benefit and only to pray for spiritual and moral improvement, which we know to be God's will?

I think that is not the case. It seems to me

that we are shown the way to pray by our Lord's own example. Our Lord prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane for earthly benefit. He prayed: "O, My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." But you see there is a proviso: "If it be possible," and we know that it went on, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." In other words, no earthly benefit, that is, neither health, nor wealth, nor friends, nor success, nor good name for ourselves; nor victory, nor power, nor freedom, nor even existence for our country; none of these things can we certainly say are for our benefit. We do not know, nobody knows, what in the course of the world's changes is good either for the individual or for the nation, and we can only pray, as our Lord Himself prayed, "If it be possible, let this thing we want come to pass," and pray also for resignation: "Nevertheless, not my will but Thine be done." We must remember that that prayer was prayed in the moment of His agony; had it been fulfilled literally, it would have destroyed the purpose of His life on earth. His prayer meant in His mind: If it were possible that His work could be fulfilled without that condition, without that final passion. It could not. And so His prayer was answered only in the sense that He was united with God's will, and events took their natural course.

All our prayers must be in that way. He tells us to pray in His name. That does not mean tacking on the words "Through our Lord Jesus Christ" at the end of our prayers. Some people seem to think that to pray in Jesus' name they have only to use those words. That is not so. We pray in Jesus' name when we pray in His Spirit, as we might suppose Him praying in our position. And, as I say, for all earthly, for all temporal good, that prayer in Gethsemane gives the model. There is no reason why we should not pray for them. He prayed for temporal good, and our prayer may well be the condition of God's giving us the boon we asked. God is our Father, and we should learn to speak to Him without shyness or reserve, naturally as children, and we cannot do that if we leave out half the needs and interests of our human life. It is quite right for children or schoolboys to pray that they may win a game, and they should not be told it is silly. It is quite right that we should pray for the success of our plans and efforts. So let us pray without reserve, telling God everything we want, but always praying when it comes to earthly boons, with this proviso in our mind, "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

Lastly, we come to prayer for spiritual and moral improvement. This we know to be according to the will of God, and so it would seem

that, if we pray for these things and they do not come, then there must be something wrong with our prayer, that we are not sincere, or that we are not, as our Lord said, believing.

Now that may be so. Very often we are not sincere with ourselves. Still more often we do not really believe. Spiritual changes and moral revolution are more difficult, not less, than the physical; though it is very hard for any one who knows his own weakness really to believe in God's grace to make him better. So it may be that we are not believing. But I think that it is not always the case. Sometimes it is possible that we pray with sincerity and faith for some special grace, that we pray against impurity, or pride, or selfishness, or sloth, and yet we find that we seem to make no progress. I think that may be true. Sometimes, of course, it is not true. But sometimes it is, and I believe the reason to be this: that we only know part of ourselves; we do not know our own character fully, and we cannot tell at what rate it is well that we should make progress. You know very well that this is the case with regard to education. If you have a boy who is very fond of cricket, and likely to be good at it, you will probably find him humble about his faults therein, anxious to be told, ready to go through any drudgery to improve, and, indeed, to give up all other of

his occupations to that end. If you have a boy or girl fond of music and talented, you will find them willing very often to spend all their time in study, even to spend indoors that period when they ought to be out of doors, to the risk of injuring their health and prospects, so ready are they in that particular respect to improve, so anxious are they to become proficient, whereas in other ways they may be indolent and unwilling to learn.

Now, everybody knows that it is unwise to let a boy or girl specialize too early and to let them run only on the line of their own interests. It is not wise for any one too early to narrow their interests into one groove, and we know that if you leave a young person alone, that is almost certain to happen.

May not that be true also in our moral and spiritual life? We see in our characters some fault, some weakness, a temptation, for instance, to cowardice or to impurity, and these things trouble us. We cannot bear them, we are distressed, and we pray very ardently that they may be removed. But we do not see the other parts of our characters, and it may be that if we were to conquer that one trouble about which we think, we should never learn of our other weaknesses, and instead of improving we should give way to very great sins of pride. All of us know

people to whom that has happened; people who are full of pride, of which they are totally unaware because they are not subject to, or because they have conquered, certain sins which in other people lead to much self-contempt. You know the story of Father Stanton and the drunken postman. The drunken postman was converted, and the result of it was that he became extremely unpleasant in his family, disagreeable, proud and self-righteous. So one day Father Stanton sent for the postman and said to him: "Tom, go and get roaring drunk to-night." The man replied: "Father, what do you mean? You know very well I gave that up entirely, and you know how God helps me to resist temptation." "Yes," said Father Stanton," that is true, but you are a much worse man now than before; you are so full of conceit and pride that you are perfectly intolerable and utterly un-Christian. I liked you much better before, and that is why I tell you now to get drunk."

You must remember that that is a sort of symbol of what might go on in any one of us, and it might go on with more acuteness, according as we feel the need of some particular grace; suppose that grace wonderfully to be granted, we might go all to pieces in other respects whilst thinking that everything was right with us. That seems to be the reason why God very often

allows us to fall, to fall into the sin we most detest, for which we despise ourselves as we do not for our other sins. He allows us to fall in order that by that humiliation we may learn how slow and difficult is the path towards perfection, and how greatly we need the grace and help of Christ Jesus.

At the same time, let us remember that very often in these respects we make much more progress than we suppose. Very often, when we think temptation is as strong in its attraction as ever, we are in error. It may be our consciences are more highly sensitive and that we see things we should have passed over before. Those who have made their confession will realize how they see all kinds of sin in themselves that they had never thought of before in their earlier years, and that the sin they deplore may be the final burst of storm before the sunshine, the darkness before the dawn.

Say not the struggle nought availeth,
The labour and the wounds are vain,
The enemy fainteth not, nor faileth,
And as things have been they remain.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars,
It may be in yon smoke concealed,
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,
And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the slow waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by Eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light,
In front the sun climbs slow, how slowly,
But westward, look, the land is bright!

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